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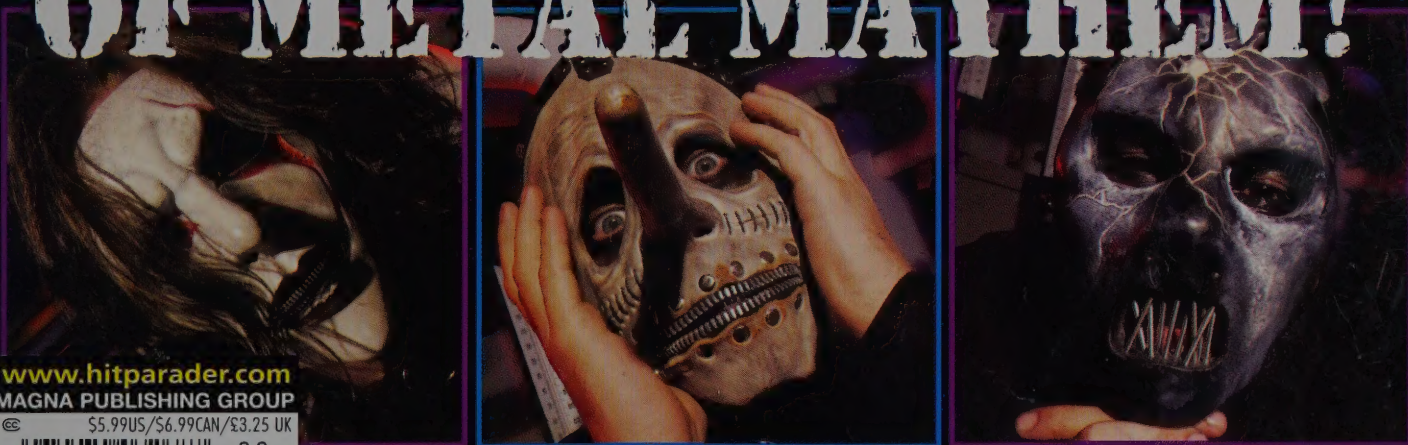
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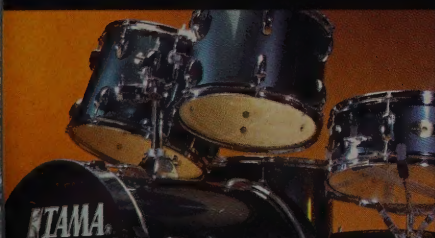
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WE READ YOUR

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OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Thank you for helping to make 2004 the year that hard rock came out of the "darkness" and into the light! Thanks to the Darkness, rock and roll has once again discovered that it's okay to have some fun and make some loud music. Enough with frowning and bemoaning our fate! Enough with staring at our shoes when we perform! Enough of talentless musical simplicity. Thanks to the Darkness an age of musical excess—big hair, big mouths and big riffs—is back in all its attention-garbing glory!
Michael
Syossett, NY

The Darkness are the bomb!! They've dropped the Big One on rock and roll, and the music crowd has responded in the right way. Sure, some people may see these English guys as something of a joke. But if you understand anything about rock history—and you love what the form has stood for over the last 40 years—then you should embrace the Darkness with your

hearts, minds and kidneys.
Squawk
Medford, OR

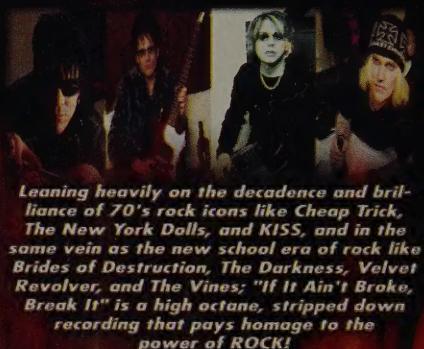
I find your intense coverage of the Darkness very interesting. After hyping so-called New Metal for the better part of the last half-decade, you suddenly seem quite content to turn your backs on the "new" and return oh-so-comfortably to the "old". Sure, the too-familiar look, sound, and attitude that retro rockers like the Darkness bring to music is entertaining on any number of levels. But at the same time, while we've all heard this before thanks to the likes of AC/DC, Zeppelin and Queen, we need to continue to support the new faces of hard rock.
Tony
Lubbock, TX

The world is a serious place.



The Darkness: Changing the face of the rock scene.

STARWOOD IF IT AIN'T BROKE, BREAK IT!



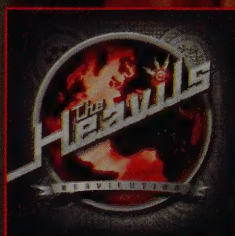
Leaning heavily on the decadence and brilliance of 70's rock icons like Cheap Trick, The New York Dolls, and KISS, and in the same vein as the new school era of rock like Brides of Destruction, The Darkness, Velvet Revolver, and The Vines; "If It Ain't Broke, Break It" is a high octane, stripped down recording that pays homage to the power of ROCK!



VISION DIVINE
"Stream Of Consciousness"

Power Metal fans will surely be familiar with Vision Divine, the band led by former Labyrinth guitarist Dier Thoenes. Their 3rd release, and first for Metal Blade marks the debut of vocalist Michele Luppi (replacing Fabio Lione). This is a new start for the band, and an exciting new "concept story" based on one very divided one: 14 chapters, told and together.

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There is war, pestilence, starvation and crime. I want the music to which I am listening to reflect the state of the world. This isn't the time for "party hearty" rock. It's time for introspective and thoughtful music that opens the mind to the horrors of the world.
Samantha
Lexington, KY

THE DEBATES RAGE ON!

It seems as if we're entering a very strange time in rock history—a period when instead of moving forward, we're actually very content to move backwards! I look at a band like Velvet Revolver, and I see an updated version of Guns 'N Roses... 15 years after that band scored big. I hear bands like Jet, the Datsuns and the Darkness and I instantly recall countless halcyon bands from the '70s and '80s. I don't know if this is good or bad for rock and roll, but I'm doing my best to appreciate it for what it is.

Rob
Rockford, IL

I'm sick and tired of great bands breaking up to form crappy bands. Does anyone believe that Damageplan is anywhere near as good as Pantera? How about Audioslave holding a candle to either Soundgarden or Rage Against the Machine. Would you rather have the original Guns 'N Roses and Stone Temple Pilots, or the watered-down riffing of Velvet Revolver? I don't know about you, but the originals blow away the newcomers every time!
Chuck
Sarasota, FL



Korn: Will they be remembered?

You people at **Hit Parader** really tick me off at times. Yeah, I love 95% of the interviews you print and the bands you cover, but sometimes you just go too far. How 'bout showing a little respect for the hard

working bands who live on metal's outer periphery? Sometimes you play it sooo safe, showing us the latest major label wanna-be rather than some great indie band—who you relegate to a quick-dis-

missal "review" in the back of the mag. It's time to change your perspectives... at least a little.
Steve
Lincoln, NE

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Just in case anyone has forgotten: Godsmack, Korn, P.O.D., Linkin Park and Marilyn Manson rule! I've heard that some misguided souls want to start dismissing these bands and calling them "yesterday's news." Wrong! They've all contributed something vital to the hard rock lexicon, and I know they're gonna keep doing that for years and years to come.

Lexi
Ottawa, Canada

SLIPKNOT CONFUSION

I find myself wondering about the future of Slipknot. In some accounts I read how happy these guys are to be back together. In other stories I'm told that they can't wait to finish this tour so they can break up and go their separate ways. What gives? What am I supposed to believe? It's very hard for a fan to really get behind a band when in the back of your mind you think they might break up in the near future.

Randy
Las Vegas, NV

It's so great to have Slipknot back and rockin' harder and crazier than ever. I like when you call them the Nine Man Mutant Metal Army because that's exactly what they are—nine guys who seem to function together with an almost military-like precision when it comes to playing great heavy music.

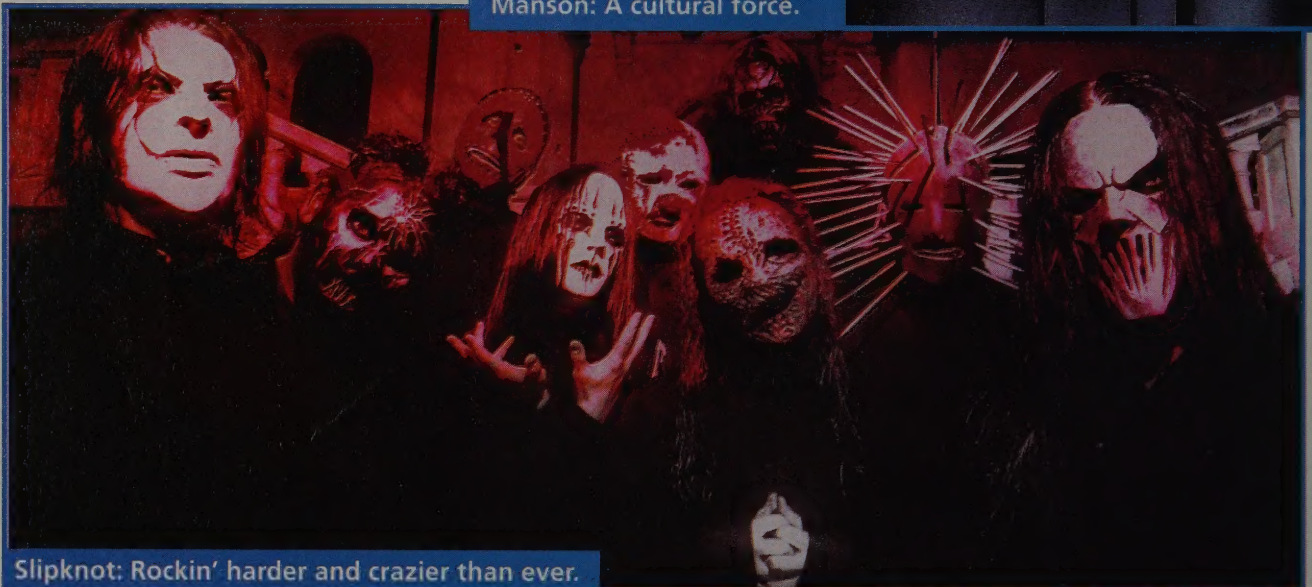
Viv
Springfield, MA

I've been a big Slipknot fan since their first album was released back in the late '90s. Now, six years later, I can't wait to see them as part of this year's *Ozzfest*. I saw them headline the Jagermeister tour a few months ago, and they rocked! But outside, with about 20,000 fans to cheer them on, I'm sure they're gonna just explode.

Frank
Greensboro, NC



Manson: A cultural force.



Slipknot: Rockin' harder and crazier than ever.

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CAUGHT IN THE ACT

BY DAMON LANCASTER

BLACK SABBATH

The door to Black Sabbath's backstage dressing room was closed tighter than the proverbial drum. It was clear that nobody was going in and, for the moment at least, nobody was coming out. In front of that door was stationed a beefy security guard dressed in para-military-looking garb, a scowl fierce enough to stop a charging rhino adorning his weather-worn face. Undeterred, a phalanx of perhaps 20 people—comprised mostly of local music celebrities, record label workers and radio contest winners—milled about doing their best to absorb every nuance of the intensely-charged backstage atmosphere. Then, as if being fed manna directly from rock and roll heaven, the deep, low rumble of Tony Iommi tuning his guitar came wafting through that barricaded entrance, much to the delight of the assembled throng.

"I've waited all my life to see the original Black Sabbath perform, and this is finally my chance—maybe my last chance," said one 19-year-old backstage participant. "I won a radio contest that got me two tickets and passes—maybe I'll even get to meet the band."

Well, not before the show he wouldn't. It was only 20 minutes before Sabbath was scheduled to take the stage as part of their historic *Ozzfest 2004* tour, and the burly security guard seemed to take particular pleasure when word came down from On High to clear the backstage area so that Iommi, Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer Butler and tour drummer Mike Bordin, could complete their various pre-show rituals. But no one in attendance seemed to mind. They sensed that they had been in the presence (or at least the proximity) of greatness, and whether they got to shake the Oz' somewhat shaky hand before the show or after seemed to hold little significance.

For their part, the members of Sabbath were totally oblivious to the little melodrama taking place outside of their dressing room door. At that moment, these veteran rockers were far too wrapped up in taking care of last-minute preparations for their impending performance to be overly concerned with anything happening outside their tightly controlled world. Indeed, it almost appeared as if they were so totally focused on the various tasks at hand that nothing short of a full-scale nuclear explosion would have drawn even one iota of their attention.

A few scant minutes later, however, things backstage had radically changed. This legendary unit had completed their pre-show tasks and were primed and ready to treat the sold out gathering of 15,000 fans to a night they would not soon forget. Arriving on stage to the haunting strains of *War Pigs*, the Sabs tore into their blistering 90-minute set with a vim and vigor belying their cumulative 140 years of rock and roll experience. For many it was as if the clock had been magically turned back to 1973, a time when this original Sabbath lineup had first ruled the rock roost. For others—especially those who were too

"This has been one of the most special tours of my life."



young to have witnessed Sabbath the first time around—it was a special, and perhaps final opportunity to see first-hand how these vintage master blasters had helped lay the foundation for the entire heavy metal superstructure.

Ozzy dominated the proceedings with his nasally vocal forays and crowd-inciting chants, while his movements still appeared hampered by his 2003 ATV crash. At the same time, Iommi proved to be the glue holding the group's musical proceedings together. The band unleashed an array of tunes featured on their recently-released nine-CD set, **Black Box**, including such time-honored metal chestnuts as *Iron Man*, *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath* and *Children Of The Grave*, all of which kept those in attendance on their feet and cheering from first note to last. Indeed, by the time the climactic notes of the band's final encore, *Paranoid*, finished echoing through the cavernous outdoor space, both the band and their followers had been transformed into a sweaty, heaving mass that had given their all for rock and roll.

"This has been one of the most special tours of my life," Iommi said in the band's crowded post-concert meet-and-greet room. "It was rather unexpected, which makes it all the more special. Every night I can feel the love that the fans have for us—and I hope that same kind of love is transmitted back to them. I wish we had the time and the opportunity to thank each and every one of them personally, but that's impossible. Hopefully, the music, and knowing how much we appreciate them, is enough to keep them satisfied."

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Pick Up 3 Inches Of Blood's metal debut *Advances & Vanguards* in stores September 28th. And look for Chimaira's DVD/EP *The Dehumanizing Process* in stores this October. Trivium's Roadrunner debut coming in early 2005.

BAND ON THE RISE!
SHOOTING STARS
BY BRAD STEWART



KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

"This band was placed in a difficult position, but it worked out fine."

One of the most dependable "constants" of the heavy metal kingdom is that *nothing* is constant. If you don't believe us, just ask the guys in Killswitch Engage. This New England-based unit felt they had everything going their way when their 2002 disc, **Alive of Just Breathing**, represented their first release on a major label. But just two weeks after that album hit the stands, original lead singer Jesse Leach decided that he had better things to do in his life than tour the world with Killswitch Engage, leaving guitarists Adam Dutkiewicz and Joel Stroetzel, bassist Mike D'Antonio and drummer Justin Foley in the kind of precarious position of which many rock and roll nightmares are made. But with the quick recruiting of vocalist Howard Jones, this heavy-handed quintet barely missed a step, a fact now loudly and proudly on display on their latest disc, **The End of Heartache**.

"This band was placed in a very difficult position, and I'm just glad that I was able to step in and help them out," Jones said. "From what I understand Jesse was having a lot of vocal problems and just didn't feel up to continuing on. It was the break of a lifetime for me, so hopefully the whole thing has worked out best for everyone. It seems to have worked out fairly well in that we were able to tour a great deal over the last two years—including the 2003 Ozzfest—and that really set us up for going into the studio and mak-

ing this album."

As shown throughout **The End of Heartache**, the personal turmoil and varied experiences the band has undergone over the last two years have only served to further inspire the music created by Killswitch Engage. Powerful, lumbering, insightful and inciteful, this unit creates a style that is equal parts "classic metal" stomp and cutting edge romp. In the process, they lay down guitar-driven grooves heavy enough to sink a battleship. In all, particularly with Jones' gruff-yet-accessible vocals adding just the right elements to the musical mix, it would seem that after years of struggle

but I'm totally pleased by the way that **The End of Heartache** turned out."

For many fans, the on-going success of Killswitch Engage mirrors the continuing evolution of the New Metal form—a form *not* represented by the likes of Linkin Park and Slipknot, but rather by the likes of Lamb of God and Shadows Fall. With **Alive or Just Breathing** having sold over 100,000 copies (a major milestone for a band as uncompromising as KSE), and their latest disc already nearing that mark, it would seem as if this pace-setting unit is out to stake a major claim to the title of New Metal's Most Influential Young Band. While none of these still-

"On this album the band has gotten heavier, while becoming more melodic."

and, yes, heartache, Killswitch Engage now find themselves sitting on the precipice of something very big.

"When I listen to the music on this album, and compare it to the last album, I note that the band has managed to get heavier, while also becoming more melodic," Jones noted. "I imagine that has something to do with my presence and my particular vocal style, but I have to believe it also has to do with the fact that this band has played together night-after-night for years, and that has a definite impact on the way you approach things. You grow tighter as a unit, and you yell in everything you do. It's hard for me to compare albums since I wasn't involved with the creation of the last one,

relatively unassuming guys will go out of his way to banner such talk, neither will any of them shy away from discussing Killswitch Engage's ever-increasing impact on the contemporary music form.

"I don't know if we want to assume any titles or become spokesmen for any musical movement," Jones said. "That's really not our style. We're one of those groups that puts our message in the music we make. But at the same time, there is a change happening in music. And I think it's a very healthy change. If we can be part of that, I don't think we'd have any problems with it."

BENEATH... BETWEEN...

BEYOND...

static-x

BENEATH... BETWEEN... BEYOND...

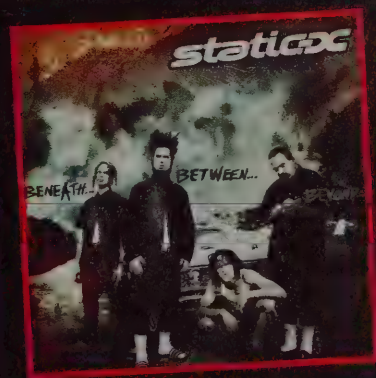
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BREAKING BENJAMIN

BY ROB ANDREWS

DESTINED TO BREAK BIG!

For a guy with only two albums to his credit, Breaking Benjamin's vocalist, guitarist, songwriter Ben Burnley has certainly begun to make his mark on the hard rock scene. With the immediate attention paid this Wilkes-Barre, PA-based unit's sophomore effort, **We Are Not Alone**, it appears like Burnley and his bandmates—drummer Jeremy Hummell, bassist Markus James and guitarist Aaron Fink—may soon realize their dream of becoming one of the most successful bands in the hard rock realm. What's causing all the commotion around Breaking Benjamin? Part of it has to do with the band's highly accessible—and highly eclectic—hard rock sound. Another part has to do with the star-studded fans this unit's music has begun to attract... among them, former Smashing Pumpkins' frontman Billy Corgan, who co-wrote three of the songs on BB's new disc with Burnley.

"Working with Billy was the experience of a lifetime," Burnley said. "There was a period in my life when the Smashing Pumpkins were my biggest influence, so obvi-

had up his sleeve. With the help of a supportive local Wilkes-Barre DJ, and a self-produced demo tape, soon over a dozen labels were showing up at Breaking Benjamin's showcase gigs—each and every one of 'em with a contract in hand. Soon these young musicians, as well as those around them, were all committed to the concept of "breaking" Benjamin and making him (along with the rest of the band) stars on the rock and roll scene.

"Everyone told me that I was crazy to leave a successful band," Fink said. "The general consensus is that lightning doesn't strike

twice. But I never looked at it that way. Mark and I had known Ben for a long time, and had always loved his music. Everything he played sounded like a potential hit to me. So when the chance came to join up with him it seemed like the natural thing to do."

With influences ranging from Korn, Tool and Nirvana to the aforementioned Smashing Pumpkins, Burnley's artistic canvas is already one of the most expansive in the contemporary music world. And as shown throughout **We Are Not Alone**—which follows hot on the heels of the group's well-received debut, **Saturate**—this is a band that seems to have just about everything going for them. They've got great songs—perhaps most notably **Alone's** ear-opening first single, *So Cold*. They've got a natural flair for instrumental dramatics. And they've got an exciting, rock-solid stage presence that makes sure everyone attending their show is having a fine ol' time. When you add them all together, what you emerge with is a band that seems destined to "break"... and break big!

"We're not shy about 'borrowing' a few things, whether it's on stage or in the studio," Burnley said. "It's all about making the best music you can and entertaining the people. You do what you have to do. I think we've got enough originality so that we can pull that off. But I've always found the music works best when you take a bunch of your favorite bands and then rip a little something off from each of them and end up with something totally new. All I know is that it works for us."



ously having the chance to actually write songs with Billy was incredibly exciting. Actually, most of this album had already been written by the time Billy and I hooked up. We spent six days in Chicago writing songs, and that time is something I'll never forget."

Despite Corgan's stellar contributions to the songs *Follow*, *Rain* and *Forget It*, there's no denying that the focal point of the Breaking Benjamin experience remains the multi-faceted Burnley. Indeed, the guy has always seemed to have a special power for garnering loyal supporters. Back in 2001, when James and Fink (both of whom were then ensconced in the successful band Lifer) heard the music being created by their long-time friend Burnley, they decided it was time to leave their burgeoning group behind, and make sure that everyone, everywhere got the chance to hear what Ben

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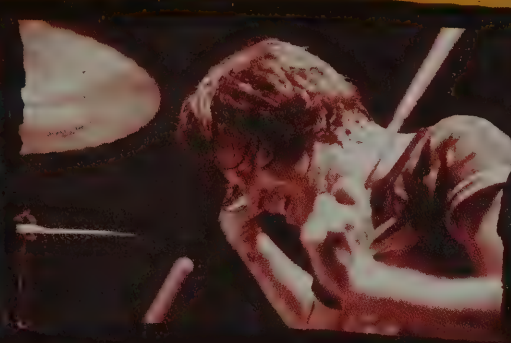
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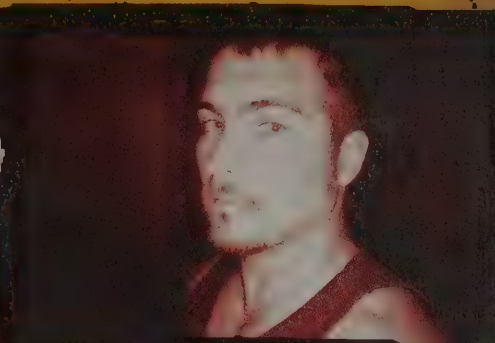
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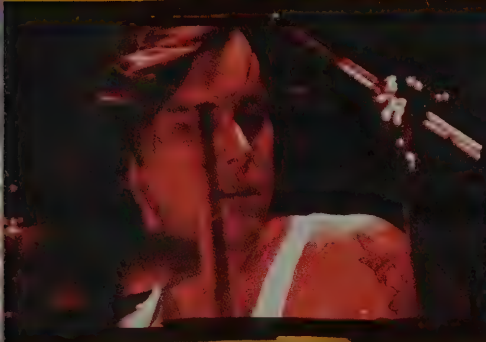
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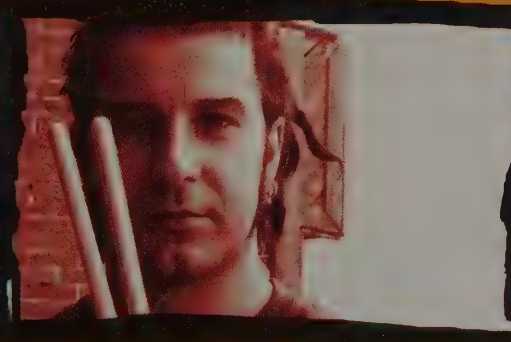
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To put it mildly, it's been a busy time for Magna-Fi. First, early in 2004 the members of this Las Vegas-based hard rock unit hit the road opening for Fuel. Then they kicked things up a notch by taking on a series of high-profile events for the ASA (Aggressive Skaters Association) Mobile Skatepark Series. And then, just when things were beginning to reach a fever pitch for Mike Szuter (vocals/guitar), C.J. Szuter (lead guitar), Rob Kley (bass) and Charlie Smaldino (drums), they joined up with the legendary Ozzfest to give fans across the nation a dose of the hard rockin' contents that fill their new disc, *Burn Out the Stars*. Yet, despite all the good things that have recently come their way, the inherent feelings of angst and frustration that permeate so much of this unit's up-tempo sound still remain very much in place.

"Those qualities are a natural part of me, and of the music this band makes," Mike said. "This album is filled with a lot of frustration, but it's the kind of emotion that just about everyone can relate to. It's not that personal in most cases. Whether it's frustration with your girlfriend, your job, or just life in general, it's the kind of stuff that everyone goes through. We've just tried to put it all to music."

Perhaps some of the frustration that the elder Szuter (pronounced zoo-ter) feels is due to the circuitous route to the top that he and his brother have been forced to take in order to fulfill their rock and roll aspirations. Originally calling Cleveland home, it was there while attending a Cheap Trick performance that the budding Szuter brothers first got the itch to turn their love of rock and roll into a career goal. After gallivanting through temporary homes in Chicago and Atlanta, the brothers followed a friend's advice and settled down (at least for the time being) in Sin City early in 2001. It was there that Magna-Fi came together as a unit, and quickly began their rise to prominence, winning a loyal—and increasingly large—local following in the process. But even then

things proved to be surprisingly difficult for this ambitious unit, especially when the deal with their first record label went asunder when the firm promptly and unceremoniously went out of business.

"That was really a tough time for us," Mike said. "It was like a kick in the ass. I mean that in two different ways—it hurt like hell because we thought we were on our way, but it also motivated us and kind of reminded me of why we started playing music in the first place. It has to be about the music, and making people react to it. Everything else just doesn't matter."

After picking themselves up, dusting themselves off and starting all over again, Magna-Fi managed to quickly regain their rock and roll footing. Continuing to write and perform, the band soon managed to both overwhelm concert audiences and amass a hard-hitting collection of tunes that showcased such diverse influences as grunge pioneers Alice In Chains, alt-metalers Quicksand and pop-rockers like the aforementioned Cheap Trick. Magna-Fi's special musical melange—as well as their amazing on-stage energy—soon began to attract the attention of major record labels, one of whom finally stepped up to the plate in 2003 and signed the M-F crew to a deal. Now, with *Burn Out the Stars*—featuring their debut single, *Where Did We Go Wrong?*—burning up the charts, it seems as if the Szuter boys have finally begun to turn all of their rock and roll dreams into reality.

"I learned a lesson a long time ago," Mike said. "That lesson is that you've got to stick with music in order to make it work. I've seen so many of my friends start families or get great jobs while I've continued to struggle following my dreams. There's no question that getting this album out and having so many people react to it so well is a kind of vindication for me. When you value something as highly as I value my music, nothing can stand in your way. That's the kind of passion that hopefully people will recognize when they hear Magna-Fi."

"When you value something as highly as I value my music, nothing can stand in your way."

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The Darkness: All-out American assault.

BLACK SABBATH: Guitarist Tony Iommi admits that he's as surprised as anyone about the band's recent reformation at *Ozzfest*. "If you had asked me back in January what Black Sabbath would be doing this year, my answer probably would have been 'not very much.' That's the fact. I didn't expect to be playing Sabbath music this year, but I'm very thankful that I am. 2004 celebrates our 35th Anniversary, so it's quite appropriate that the band is together and making music. Who knows when—and if—it will ever happen again?"

JUDAS PRIEST: Things seem to be moving along slowly-but-surely for the reunited Judas Priest as they work to complete their long-awaited new studio album—one that not only marks the return of vocalist Rob Halford, but also commemorates 30 years of Priest music. The new disc, now scheduled for an October release, promises to offer some classic slices of Priest metallic mayhem. "It's hard for me to believe that everything has come together as well as it has," Halford said. "When I listen to this new music it sounds like classic Priest to me. And I'm sure the fans will feel the same way once they have the chance to hear it."

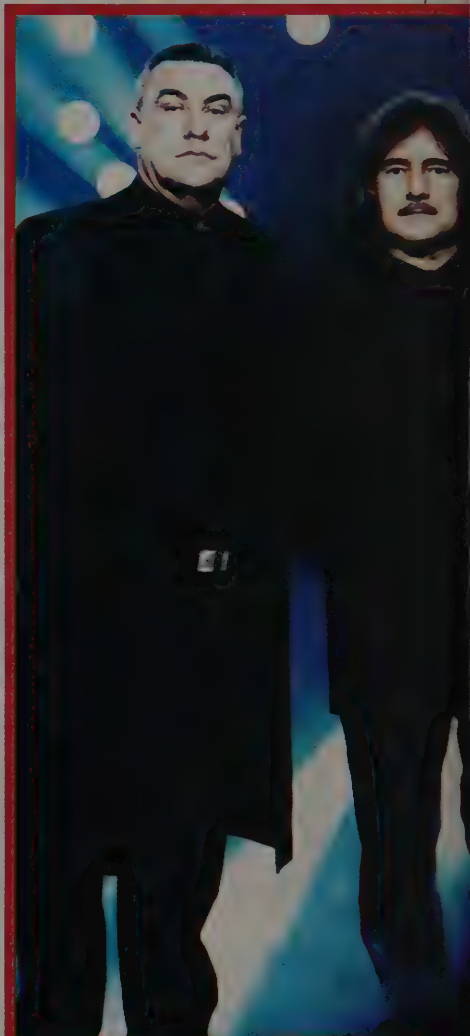
THE DARKNESS: They've completed their first U.S. tour (with the next about to begin), they've wowed audiences on both the David Letterman and Jay Leno late-nite gab-fests, and they've taken over radio and MTV airwaves. Not a bad start for the Darkness. But according to the Brit retro-rock unit, this is only the beginning of their all-out assault on the American senses. "Wait until we get the chance to do the things on stage that we do in Europe," said frontman Justin

Hawkins. "I can't wait for the chance. So far we've had to hold back a little bit because the stages we've played on are rather small. But give us a little time... I promise you won't be disappointed."

LINKIN PARK: Asking the members of Linkin Park about their *next* studio album is not the way to endear yourself to this chart-topping rap-metal unit. With the band's first two discs, *Hybrid Theory* and *Meteora*, having sold a combined total of over 12 million copies, these West Coast pioneers don't even want to look ahead. "We're always writing and thinking about music," said vocalist Chester Bennington. "But I've got to be honest when I tell you that right now getting back into the studio isn't the first thing on our mind. We've been so busy on the road that we need to take a break to reenergize ourselves. After that, I'm sure we'll be ready to go."

AUDIOSLAVE: You might think that having your debut album sell more than a million copies would be enough for a band like Audioslave. But considering that the band's members have previously been in bands that have sold a combined total of over 10 million copies, such platinum certification was nice... but nothing to get particularly excited about. That's why as the Slave crew continue work on their second album, they've got everything well in perspective. "We're staying true to who we are as musicians," said guitarist Tom Morello. "The success last time was great—and it's served to motivate us now."

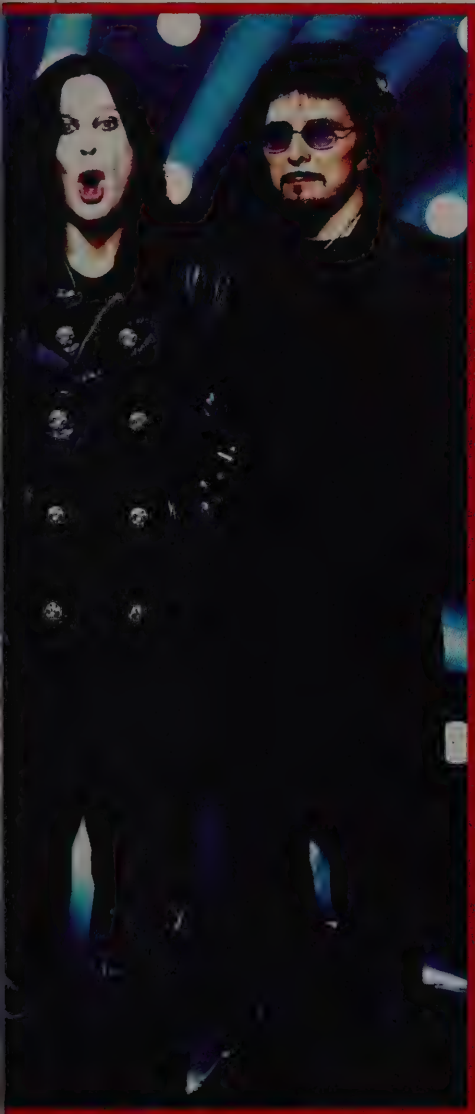
MUDVAYNE: Things are different for Mudvayne as they complete work on their third studio album. Their shock-rock image has been tempered, and their on-



Black Sabbath: Celebrating 35 years of making music.

stage histrionics have been toned down. But don't for on second believe that such changes will do anything but add even more of a metallic edge to the Midwestern unit's music. "We've made a very conscious move to change certain things," said vocalist Chad Gray. "A lot of that was done so that more focus would be placed on our music. That's still what Mudvayne is about. The image and the wild stage shows were great, but not enough people were taking the time to get under the surface and see what was really there. We saw the difference in our last tour—when we performed without makeup. Now we're going all the way with it."

AC/DC: With so many of their Hall of Fame brethren (i.e. Sabbath and Priest) making a successful splash in '04, can AC/DC be far behind. Never known as the fastest band in the studio, the legendary Thunder From Down Under was long-planning to have their next studio collection out in the fall. Now, however, it looks like the disc's release may actu-



(continued on page 21)

BREAKING NEWS

BY LOU O'NEILL, JR.

ON DEADLINE: OUR WELL EMBEDDED moles in the Korn camp whisper that the band's new album should be out in September and don't be surprised if the guys walk away from Epic Records after a long, long association. Tell you one thing, Jonathan Davis was about as upfront as any rock star could be when he told the men and women of the Fourth Estate, "It's a very scary time to be in the music industry."

When pressed, the multi-talented creative force behind Korn laid his cards on the table. Quoth Korn: "The industry is going to die! There is NO way around it. A new model has to come out, things have to change. You know, it's not like, 'Let's spend a gazillion dollars on making an album, go shoot a video, put it on TV'—that's just not happening anymore. So that's a big, scary jump for us and we've gotta' think of different ways to do this."

COMMENT: It really does make sense in this computer/digitalized/freeze-frame world we live in... It's simply called the Internet. Too bad the shakeout for the major labels will be so devastating. We've said for years in this space the "music industry" was slowly slipping away. O.K. what do they expect? There's a tune that's out there somewhere that you want and you can have it for the asking. For free! The artists aren't making a dime. It really is a no-brainer! Stay tuned.

SECRET STUFF: An American metal icon rocked the boat in the farm country. He decided to party at a private club where he was, shall we say, NOT a member. The poobahs weren't delighted when he began dancing naked in the middle of the establishment. You or I would catch jail for a stunt like this. These dude's "punishment" was a note posted on his mansion's mailbox requesting him not to do it again. Crazy world, ain't it!

QUICKIE QUIZ: Last month, we asked you to tell us exactly how many aspirin were consumed by Americans in one year. We cautioned and only in America. Correct ans.: 29 billion with a 'B'—and that's just the USA. How many trillions of aspirin is the global community consuming annually? That's a lot of Bayer aspirin! This month: name the four presidents commemorated on Mount Rushmore? From left to right if you might.

NO NAMES PLEEZE: What major league pitcher, off to a start that is mind-boggling by Cooperstown standards, is partying at night—how shall we say it...? Like it's 1999. Over-the-moon money, too.

ROCK WIRE REPORT: Manson has a wedding and a "Greatest Hits" package ready to roll. Nevertheless, there's a messy legal hitch with an old band mate. Life sure is rough for

Brian Warner. Sure, MM's antics are whack-a-ding-hoy, but, he's laughing all the way to Shelter Island if you ask these ancient ears...nobody asked us, but whatever happened to Axl Rose?...The Hawkins brothers and the Darkness decided they really wanted to snag that American brass ring. Our old buddy, John "Mutt" Lange has signed on to produce the next album. From our vantage point, the Darkness run in America is yet to come. They've never given it a full-fledged tour here, but Mutt's made magic for AC/DC, Leppard—the list is endless—and you can



Korn: "It's a very scary time to be in the music industry."

bet your bottom dollar the next CD will sound like Angus Young takes on the world...and wins. Bone-crunching yet laced with irresistible melodies. The Darkness' time is still to come...A happy birthday wish to the hard-rocking Joe Perry of Aerosmith. Number

54 blows in September 10th...The Beatles and their Apple Corps. Ltd. are going to get very nasty with Apple Computers very soon if reason doesn't prevail!...

Van Halen are turning heads with Sammy Hagar again. Dates with Shinedown were said to be particularly riveting. Only Eddie can pull this stuff off...The brand new Megadeth record should drop as you read this. It'll be the first since Dave Mustaine busted up his arm in early 2002...Fred Durst has dismissed reports that Bizkit is over as "nonsense!" We'll keep a close eye on this one.

OVER 'N' OUT: Heard on the streets of Gotham: Can you tell me the difference between an election year and a regular year? Well, naturally, an election year is about three years long...News alert: U.S. Marines actually confirm they are "torturing" Iraqi terrorists by blasting "Hell's Bells" over and over and over...A metal madman is back in rehab. Eyes-only.

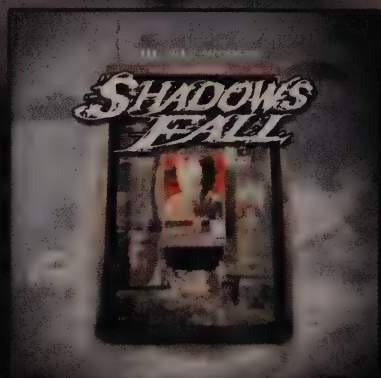
SEE YOU NEXT MONTH. Until then, please remember: Goodbye Mother, thanks for doing your very best and may you find eternal peace after a hard, hard life. Love you, Mom. Louis and Louray.

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(continued from page 19)



Linkin Park: Ready for the next step.

ally occur early in '05. "You never know with them," a band insider said. "They work at their own pace. But that's nothing new; it's been going on since **Back In Black**, and that's almost 20 years ago."

KITTIE: With the release of their new album **Until The End**, the girls in Kittie have put the tough times behind them and regained the footing that only a few years back seemingly had this Canadian trio

headed to the very top of the rock pile. "Yeah, it was a tough time," said vocalist Morgan Lander. "We had to handle a few things with the people around us, including the record label. But once we got those done, we were able to put all our attention on this album."

VELVET REVOLVER: The members of Velvet Revolver have reacted predictably to the flood of positive press that has been

generated by their debut album, **Contraband**. While Slash, Weiland and co. may have expected the good words that have flowed their way, they are surprisingly relieved by the response. "Of course you think about the way people will react to what you've done," Slash said. "How can you avoid that? No matter how much you believe in what you've done, you give a big sigh of relief when you realize that he fans are digging it."

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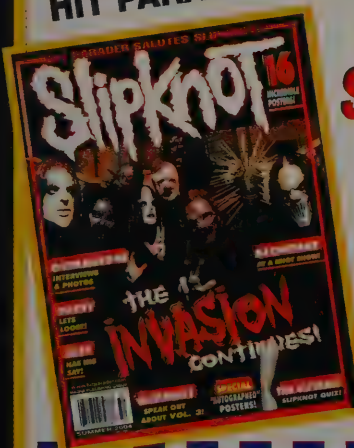
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There are certain bands whose very name has become an integral part of the heavy-metal lexicon. Black Sabbath undoubtedly stands at the very apex of that list. Now 35 years into their historic career, 2004 has emerged as a surprisingly busy year for these hallowed Princes of Darkness. Indeed, with the release of their **Black Box** set—which features all eight of their Ozzy Osbourne-era (1970–1978) albums—and their headlining role in this summer's *Ozzfest*, this has emerged as a very special time for Osbourne, guitarist Tony Iommi, bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward. Recently we were able to sit down with the loquacious Mr. Iommi to get the inside scoop on Black Sabbath as they celebrate their 35th Anniversary.

Hit Parader: How surprised were you when the offer came to headline this year's *Ozzfest*?

Tony Iommi: I guess you'd have to say that I was quite surprised. When we ended the last Sabbath tour a few years ago, everything was left very open-ended. It wasn't like we ever said "That's it. Sabbath is over." Nor did we say, "Okay everyone, let's stay in touch and do this again real soon." We all basically floated apart without knowing what might happen next... or when it might happen. As

HP: And how has it been to be back on the road with him?

TI: He's probably a bit healthier than I thought he would be, but it is still tough for him to make it through an entire show without taking a bit of a break. I believe that was the primary reason that he wanted to reunite Sabbath for this tour. He correctly believed that our set—especially with my solos and things—provided him with a little more time to rest during and between songs. He needs that. He will grow stronger as the tour goes along, but for the moment at least he's quite thankful to have some of the pressure taken off his shoulders.

HP: But with the **Black Box** set being released, and the band celebrating 35 years together, it is very appropriate that Sabbath is touring in 2004.

TI: Yes, it definitely is. As I said before, if Bill hadn't reminded me, I may not have even thought of this as being our 35th year as a band. But since it is, and since this opportunity has come our way, we're definitely going to make the most of it.

HP: The **Black Box** doesn't present your material in a "re-mixed" or "digitally enhanced" format. It's just basic Sabbath. Why didn't you update it a bit?

TI: Because we didn't want to mess around with what the fans have grown to know over the years. Perhaps if I could have used the same process to update myself, I'd do that, but I'd choose to leave the music alone. The set is a compilation of the albums we made with Ozzy during the '70s, and they stand together as what they were then... and now.

HP: We've heard so many rumors about a new Sabbath album featuring the original lineup. Where does that stand at this time?

TI: It doesn't seem to be a priority for anyone, unfortunately. A few years ago we all seemed quite focused on getting the project done. I had come up with some very strong ideas, and we spent some time in the studio, but then Ozzy decided he didn't want to do it. I think his TV show was just beginning at that time. So that's where it stands. I'm ready whenever everyone else is, that's all I can say.

HP: Do you believe that the Ozzy-era Sabbath has totally overshadowed

BLACK

BY TERRY ABBOTT

OUT OF THE BOX

someone who always likes to lead a fairly planned life, I didn't particularly like that, but I accepted it. So when the call came indicating that Sabbath should try to headline this year's *Ozzfest* it naturally came as a surprise—but quite a pleasant one at that.

SABBATH

"I've been as surprised as anyone about how active Sabbath has been this year."

HP: Does that make this particular tour that much sweeter... knowing that it's so unexpected?

TI: I don't know if I look at it quite that way, but any time I get the chance to get on stage and play Sabbath music, I enjoy it. I haven't had that opportunity too often over the last two years, so I do relish it. But what's strange is that while I've never been home as much as I've been recently, I quickly learned to enjoy it. I wasn't longing for the road. After doing that for 35 years, it was nice to take a bit of a break.

HP: Do you stay in touch with the other members of Sabbath on a regular basis when you're not together as a band?

TI: We stay in touch... but not that regularly. Up until the beginning of April, I probably hadn't spoken to Ozzy this year. Bill called me a few months ago to remind me that this year was Sabbath's 35th Anniversary. And Geezer and I stay in touch fairly regularly. But it's certainly not a daily or weekly thing—unless, of course, we're touring as Black Sabbath.

HP: Do you remember how you felt when you first heard about Ozzy's ATV accident?

TI: My reaction wasn't one of surprise. Ozzy has always kind of been someone who seemed to have an accident of some sort waiting just around the corner. But at that time I didn't realize how serious it was. I thought he may have broken something, but that he'd be back on his feet in no time. As I learned just how seriously injured he was, I obviously became quite concerned.

the other music you've made with the band over the years?

TI: Yes, and in some ways that is a shame. I understand the love that people have for the band's original lineup, and the music that was made during that time. But I believe that many fans also appreciate the music that Sabbath made after that. There were some incredible albums and perhaps one day we'll be able to do a second compilation featuring post-Ozzy material.

HP: How proud are you of the legacy that Black Sabbath has created?

TI: It's so strange that you ask that because just recently I came across some very old clippings where the writers were basically ripping us apart. They were treating Sabbath as something of a joke. I don't know exactly when it happened—maybe the early '90s if I had to guess, but all of that changed. Suddenly a new generation of bands were calling us a major influence and the media was starting to recognize what we had done. So while I think I always had a pretty good understanding that we were doing something rather special, it took others a bit of time to really catch on.

HP: At the end of the *Ozzfest* run are you going to contentedly go home to England, do some gardening, and wait for the next call from Ozzy?

TI: (Laughing) Well, I'll probably go home to England, but I doubt I'll be waiting on anyone's call. I have some solo musical plans, and I'm forging ahead with those. If my future includes Sabbath—and I certainly hope that it does—then that's fine with me. But if it doesn't, I know I'll still be making music.



TONY IOMMI
HIT PARADER



THURSDAY

BY WILLIAM BARKER

WHAT DAY IS IT?

It's pretty easy to tell that Thursday enjoy making a commotion. Whether its through the kinetic music contained on their major label debut disc, **War All The Time**, or through their words, deeds and actions, it sometimes appears as if vocalist Geoff Rickly, guitarist Steve Pedulla, guitarist Tom Keeley, bassist Tim Payne and drummer Tucker Rule will go out of their way just to make sure that they draw their fair share of audience attention. But the fact of the matter is that with their disc making significant chart headway, and their faces now frequently popping up both on TV and in magazines—both music-oriented and mainstream—it would clearly seem that this New Jersey based unit is well on their way to raising a major music industry ruckus. But that kind'a goes with the territory when your music is an infectious, incendiary blend of punk, rock and pop elements and your subject matter tends to be as explosive as a neutron bomb.

"We know who our audience is, and we think we know what they want to hear," Rickly said. "A lot of our songs are about youth, and the burn of being a certain age. These are snapshots that can never be taken again. We don't know if these are songs that people are gonna listen to five or ten years from now. We'd like to think they are. But for us, they're designed to be of-the-moment, truly of this instant in time. That's the way the fans view life... and so do we."

It's clear as 20/20 vision that for Thursday, making music is designed to be an outlet for the emotions housed in their hearts and souls. Their sound is an impassioned cry of longing, despair and desperation, all tinged with an undying degree of hope. And in the hands of this emotive quartet such volatile rock and roll reactants are handled with a surprising degree of love and care. Indeed, the music created by Thursday is nothing short of a true rock and roll revelation. Equal parts punk rant,

"Our songs are about youth, and the burn of being young."

pop rave and rock roar, the sounds spawned by this quartet are challenging on all levels—lyrically insightful, artistically compelling and technically complex.

"It would be a big mistake to just dismiss our music after giving it a quick listen" Rule said with a smile. "There's a lot going on there, on a lot of different levels. This stuff is kind of complex. These songs are hard for us to play. How many bands get to say that? Playing them live is really a challenge because we each have to focus so totally in getting our parts right. But we really enjoyed making such complex music. It was a challenge for us, and we're all very pleased with the way things turned out."

For Thursday, the release of **War All The Time** culminates this band's five-year



Thursday: "We know our audience and what they want to hear."

"We don't know if people will be listening to our songs five years from now."

quest for major label recognition. First formed in 1998, the group released their initial indie album in 1999 to a modicum of media recognition and fan support. Indeed, through the strength of the music featured on that first effort, their sold-out club shows throughout the Northeast became "must see" events for many rock and roll insiders. Then in 2001, a larger indie label released Thursday's second effort, **Full Collapse**, a disc that represented a coming-of-age for this power-packed unit. It was upon their sophomore disc that this band's not-so-delicate blend of high-octane musical reactants began to fully express the wide-ranging emotional canvas that serves as the foundation of Thursday's sound.

"When you get the chance to make a second album, a lot of things come together in your music... or at least they should," Rickly said. "You begin to get the idea that you're in this for the long haul, so you take a little more time and care with what you're doing. In our case, that made a lot of difference."

A big difference, indeed! Slowly but surely, as their albums won over more and more converts, and as they hit the road to open for just about anyone that would let

them set up their amps on stage, word about this unit's very special approach began to make the rounds. By 2002, they were invited to partake in a main stage spot on the Warped Tour, a gig which helped spark support for their single *Understanding In A Car Crash*. That, in turn, ignited **Full Collapse** to sell nearly 250,000 albums in the U.S.—an *amazing* number for an indie band. Needless to say, such numbers, and such artistic recognition soon had the major labels knocking on Thursday's door.

"We really put the pressure on ourselves once we signed," Rickly said. "After going through all that we had, and seeing our career slowly build, we knew this was our one big chance... and we didn't want to blow it. Suddenly, we realized making music wasn't going to be a hobby for us—it was what we wanted to do for the rest of our lives. It kind of made us think and really focus on everything we did on **War All The Time**. It seemed there wasn't a single note on the album that we didn't labor over. There were times when I wondered if this record would ever get finished! But then I started to listen to what we were accom-

plishing, and I realized that everything we were putting ourselves through was well worth it."

Throughout their latest album, the care and focus that Thursday put into their music is very much in evidence. From the strident power of *For the Workforce* *Drowning* to the heart-felt emotions featured in *Between Rupture and Rapture*, this unit has provided the contemporary music world with something undeniably fresh and unequivocally exciting. And while they may be too heavy for Top-40 addicts and too cerebral for most metalheads, Thursday isn't worried one bit about having their music fall between the proverbial cracks. They've already proven that there's a big, hungry audience out there just waiting to devour anything these guys may choose to offer up.

"If anyone has any questions about us or about what we're doing, all they've got to do is come check us out live," Rickly said. "That's where it really all comes together. We like to think that our albums are really strong, but that the music goes to an entire new level once we get on stage."

Carnival of Souls: "Eventually we'll get what we want."



Most of you reading this hopefully will recall that throughout most of 2003, **Hit Parader** proudly bannered our Reality HP contest—a chance for an unsigned hard rock band to win a demo deal with a major label. In response, thousands of entries poured in from all over the world... France, Brazil and Japan included. But somewhat ironically, it turned out to be a band in our own proverbial backyard—New York City's own Carnival of Souls—who ended up winning our contest. Here's your introduction to the Reality HP winners, and we promise to follow their career as they begin the often dizzying trek up the rock and roll mountain.

For Carnival of Souls, winning **Hit Parader's Reality HP** contest represents more than an honor—quite simply, it represents the opportunity of a lifetime. With the contest prize being a demo deal with powerful Atlantic Records, this New York City-based unit knows that their heavy-handed tunes will now be heard by some of the top movers and shakers in the rock and roll biz. Over the last three years, guitarist Rob "The Machine" DeForge, vocalist Lee Cancela, bassist Gene Hunter and drummer Stet Howland (a former member of W.A.S.P.), have learned the hard way just how difficult it can be to get the chance to have their hard rockin' songs reach the right hands. So they understand better than anyone the chance provided by **Reality HP**.

"Winning this contest is great for us," Hunter said. "Hopefully it'll give our career the boost it needs. It can get very frustrating at times. But we're so determined that we've never let anything like that stand in our way. From the moment we got this band together, our intention has been to do things our way and to do things the *right* way. We don't believe in shortcuts, so we're very prepared to do whatever possible to make sure that the music gets heard and that we're able to bring what we do to the people who want to hear it."

"Winning this contest will hopefully open a lot of doors for us."

For those wondering, what Carnival of Souls "do" is play a band of metal that simultaneously pays homage to the form's 40-year history, while adding a healthy dose of cutting-edge elements into the mix. The style has already won over club crowds throughout the New York/New Jersey area and allowed this quartet to open shows for such prestigious headliners as Queensryche, Motorhead, Anthrax and Superjoint Ritual. Now, with a little luck, CoS could soon be joining their illustrious road partners as a major recording unit.

"That's the goal," Hunter said. "Whether or not the **Reality HP** contest leads directly to us getting a deal, we know that we'll eventually get what we want. We've spent a lot more time writing our songs than dreaming up stage tricks, and I think that will pay off in the long run. Our music just comes alive on-stage. We don't mind taking our time a little bit now because we're hoping that

once we get where we want, we're gonna stick around for a long, long time."

So how does a band like Carnival of Souls take an opportunity like winning the **Reality HP** contest and best utilize it to promote their career? Well, obviously, they hope that their demo efforts convince the top-echelon brass at Atlantic Records that they're worthy of a full-scale contract. If, for whatever reason, that doesn't happen, they're more ready than ever to take their experiences—as well as their new tapes—on to the next label port-of-call. Either way, with a little luck by year's end hopefully a big-time label will give this talented young band the thumbs-up they're seeking.

"Hey, this is all very exciting for us," Hunter said. "We can see all our efforts beginning to pay off, and that's all you can really ask for. We expect big things from this band because we're good and we put on an amazing live show. We know that once people see us and hear us, they'll like us."

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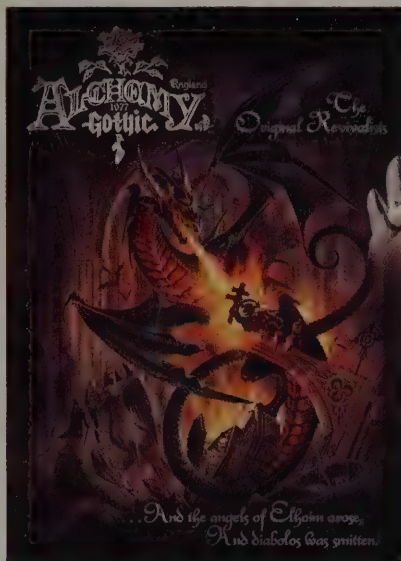


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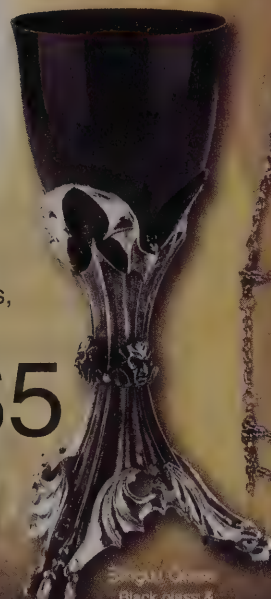
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Damageplan appear to have it *all* goin' on. With their debut album, **New Found Power**, scaling the charts, and their various tours doing bang-up business (including their recent stint as headliners of MTV2's *Headbanger's Ball* road outing), it would seem as if guitarist Dimebag Darrell, drummer Vinnie Paul, vocalist Patrick Lachman and bassist Bobzilla are casting a mighty large shadow across the hard rock playing field. While their fans may still long for a return to Dime and Vinnie's previous band, Pantera, it now appears as if much of the metal world has turned the corner and accepted Damageplan for who and what they are— one of the true kick-ass bands of 2004! Recently we caught up with those ever-chatty brothers-that-rock, Dime and Vinnie, to get the inside word on Damageplan.

Hit Parader: So, a number of months have now passed since **New Found Power** was released. Have you been satisfied by the response?

Vinnie Paul: I don't know if the word "satisfied" would do justice to the way we're feeling these days about the manner in which the fans have responded to us and our album. We've been overwhelmed. You know, as much as we kind'a knew that there were a lot of old Pantera fans out there who would be anxious to hear what Dime and I had come up with, I don't think either of us was really prepared for the kind of reaction we've received. It's been such a total outpouring of support that it almost makes me speechless— and anyone who knows me, knows that's not an easy thing to do!

Dimebag Darrell: When you've gone through what we have over the last few years, where for a lot of the time you really weren't sure what was going on in your musical life, just being able to make music again is an amazing thing. Having something like that happen to you makes you appreciate the opportunity you have that much more. But then to have the exact people we most wanted to please say that they really enjoy what we're doing is just the best!

HP: You guys have recently been on the *Headbanger's Ball* tour. Share some highlights with us.

DD: It's a real rock and roll tour, which is what we like. You've got us, Drowning Pool, Hatebreed and Unearth, so from the time you arrive at the show until the time you leave the music never lets up. We all grab you by the throat from the start... and we don't let go. The tour has been awesome for us because we've gotten the chance to get out there and play this music for the people and interact with the fans.

VP: We've missed a lot of our old friends on the road. We haven't seen 'em in three or four years, and it's great to feel their energy as we tour around the nation. They've been so supportive of us, that when we get on stage we want to thank them in the best way we know how— and that's by playing the loudest, heaviest set we can.

HP: How have your "new guys"—

WREAKING HAVOC DAMAGEPLAN

BY ROB ANDREWS



Dimebag:
"We've come together as a band even faster than I thought."

Patrick Lachman and Bobzilla— held up on the road?

VP: They've been great. It's not like this is a totally new experience for them. They've been out there before— but in somewhat different capacities. I mean just last year Patrick was touring as the guitarist in Halford. It's a big step to go behind the microphone for the first time and be the frontman in a band like this for an entire tour. But we've all been able to hang together and bring this band tighter than ever. That's one of the things I think that Dime and I really wanted after what happened with Pantera— we wanted to feel like we were part of a real band again.

DD: It's been really refreshing for us, as well. Vinnie and I had basically worked with the same people for a long, long time. So getting a fresh start with Damageplan has been a great thing for us. Of course we miss some of the old music, but we don't necessarily miss some of the old people. It's so nice to go on stage with people every night who you know really want to be there with you.

HP: It seems as if the animosity you harbor towards your old Pantera bandmate, Phil Anselmo, is still very much there.

DD: We're not angry at Phil, and I don't know if we ever were. It was always much more a question of frustration about the whole situation with Pantera. He didn't do right by us, but we learned not to expect very much from him. That band was our lives. It was our priority. Obviously it wasn't his priority, and I think he tried to rub that in our faces as often as he could. But we were willing to put up with it in order to keep something we loved— Pantera— alive.

VP: It's already kind of in the past for us. The fact that Phil disrespected us the way he did hurt at the time. We can't deny that. I mean how would you like it if you discovered someone you had worked with for nearly 15 years was leaving... and you found out over the radio rather than from him. It ticked me off. But once we got over that, we realized that it might turn out to be the best thing that's happened to us because it gave us a fresh start— and this band is the result of that.

HP: The video for *Save Me* has drawn a lot of attention Damageplan's way.

DD: These days there are few guarantees about getting your videos seen by the

Vinnie Paul:
"It's great seeing a
lot of old friends on
the road."



"The response we've gotten from this album and tour has blown us away."

number of people you want. Sometimes it seems like you've got to be a rapper or a pop star to have your video get on the air. But thanks to us being involved with MTV2 due to the *Headbanger's Ball* tour, they've been very supportive of the video. It's getting seen by the people who care about us and our kind of music, so that's really all

we can ask.

HP: But Pantera had some platinum-selling albums. Is that beyond your immediate expectations for Damageplan?

VP: We'd love it to be just what the doctor ordered— a bunch of platinum albums for everyone! But we're realists. The music

world has changed a lot since the days when Pantera was routinely selling a million albums. These days a lot of people look down upon what I like to think of as *real* rock music. But things are changing. I can feel it. And hopefully we'll be one of the bands that's leading that change.

"Coming together in Springfield allowed us to grow at our own speed."

For a relatively small town, in recent days Springfield, MA has certainly made its presence felt in the rock and roll world. A few years back the city located approximately mid-point between New York and Boston provided the world with the plaintive strains of Staind. And now Springfield has done it again, presenting for our metallic listening pleasure the power-packed young unit Split Shift. As proven throughout their debut disc, **Tension**, vocalist Kyle Small, guitarist Joe Chisholm, guitarist Ken Robert, drummer Kurt Schon and bassist Bill Brault bring a decidedly different sensibility to their musical musings. Indeed, from first note to last, this is music that defiantly falls out of either "new metal" or "old metal" classifications—it just rocks hard and loud.

"We're a very heavy band," Small stated. "But we've come by our sound naturally. One of the benefits of growing up in a place like Springfield is that you get a lot of Big City influence without any of the direct pressure to conform. There aren't that many other bands there that you're competing against. There's a lot less pressure. That way we've been able to do our own thing our own way, and this music is the end result of that process."

When Small alludes to Split Shift being

BY TOM LINDGREN

able to do things "their own way" he's not kidding! After all, how many other bands can you recall that started out life as a cover band; in this case one named Children of the Korn. Yup, these guys were once considered the best Korn "tribute" band in the Northeast— even reaching the point of having their idols actually ask them to open a show for them. But if your rock and roll goal is to attain your own recording contract and tour the world, it's impossible to do it without breaking away from your influences and staking out on your own. That's exactly what Split Shift did in 2002, and the results they've achieved since then have been nothing short of astounding.

"Korn was a major influence on us," Small said. "We still love their music. But after being Children of the Korn for a while, we decided it was time to try our own thing. It was a very natural step for us, and while you can probably still hear some Korn influence in some of the stuff we play, we think we're well on our way to establishing our own identity as Split Shift."

One of the key ingredients to establishing that unique identity occurred when the band was united with legendary producer

Roy Thomas Baker (Queen, Ozzy, Guns 'N Roses, Motley Crue) for the recording of **Tension**. Immediately the veteran knob-twister heard something special housed within Split Shift's volatile, metallic brew, and he worked hard with the group to bring every propulsive element to the fore. The results, as heard on such tracks as *Drowned*, *Free* and *Face to Face* show a young band in full control of their impressive musical arsenal. Indeed, throughout their debut release, Split Shift display a vitality and vigor too often absent from today's crop of bands. Perhaps it is their Korn inspiration. Perhaps it is their small-city roots. Perhaps it is just the natural mean of expression for this talented quintet. Perhaps it is a combination of each and every one of these ingredients. But whatever the reason may be for this unit's explosive sound, there's no denying that Split Shift have arrived in a Big Way in the contemporary music scene.

"Nothing has ever been handed us," Small said. "We went out and worked in clubs for a long time before we felt confident enough to try and take this to the next level. We've paid our dues. We've learned our lessons. Now it's time to take what we've learned and put it to good use."

SPLIT SHIFT

"We're a very heavy band that's come by its sound naturally."

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There's no doubt about it, when you're Metallica, the expectations are *always* enormous. After more than two decades of historic, precedent-shattering, chart-topping exploits, it's become increasingly difficult for Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett, James Hetfield

standing ovation status, some fans insist it is a major "disappointment" brought on by both the band member's increasing age and their more sedate off-stage lifestyles. It's a situation that has begun to annoy even the band's normally unflappable members.

"There are some fans that think we should have stopped making

ingly, which would fall by the way-side. Well, New Metal has now apparently run its course, leaving only the most talented metal practitioners standing in its wake. Metallica has clearly emerged from this battle of musical wills with more prestige than ever being heaped upon their broad shoulders. And despite their well-publicized off-

Metallica's stage work seems sharper and more powerful than ever. Indeed, upon the concert stage, Metallica now continually rips out top-flight, hard-hitting metal anthems, songs that defy time, trends and temperaments on their quest to find rock and roll "nirvana".

But we've got to ask: What is it that keeps

"I don't know if we've ever been more cohesive as a band."

METALLICA

Road Warriors

BY PATRICK JAMES

and Robert Trujillo to continually live up to the hopes, dreams and aspirations of their millions of followers around the world. They can release an album that sells millions of copies and some will view it as a commercial disappointment. They can pack arenas around the globe with a stage show that surpasses anything human eyes have ever witnessed, and certain long-time fans will still label the Metallimen as aging "sell outs."

Sometimes it appears that Metallica have created such an incredible legacy during their precedent-shattering existence that there's apparently little they can now do to shock, surprise or delight their fans. Even the response to their latest album, 2003's *St. Anger*, has been nothing if not lukewarm—at least in terms of the kind of reaction usually reserved for Metallica discs. It seems almost irrelevant that the album spawned a number of radio-friendly hits, and instantly sailed to the Number One position in the sales charts. In the eyes of Metallica's long-time faithful it was "just another" Metallica album, an almost-expected dose of hard rocking brilliance from the undisputed masters of the metal realm. Much the same can be said in regard to the group's latest tour, the arena packing *Madly In Anger With the World* road outing, where despite its sold-out,

albums after *Ride The Lightning*, and stopped touring in 1989," Ulrich joked. "I think it's one of those unique things in rock and roll that fans who have been with you from the very beginning naturally tend to reject some of the later things that more and more people are attracted to. Some fans hate a band as soon as they leave the 'underground' and become well known. That's too bad. I think it's actually kind of funny, but you'd be amazed by the number of fans who only want to talk about what it was like in Metallica back in 1982."

Still, when all is said and done, the few remaining die-hard fans who respond only to the strident chords of *Fade To Black* have long since been usurped by a new brigade of Metallica loyalists who recognize these Bay Area bashers as the quintessential hard rock band of their era...if not of all-time. Ever since the release of the band's historic *Metallica* album in 1992, the group has represented the pinnacle of metal success—the band whose sound, style and attitude has set the precedents against which *all* aspiring hard rock bands must be measured.

Even at the height of the late-'90s New Metal Revolution, when Metallica was occasionally looked upon by some misguided souls as little more than paleozoic corporate fodder, those in-the-know sensed which bands would survive, and correspond-

ingly, which would fall by the way-side. Well, New Metal has now apparently run its course, leaving only the most talented metal practitioners standing in its wake. Metallica has clearly emerged from this battle of musical wills with more prestige than ever being heaped upon their broad shoulders. And despite their well-publicized off-

stage histrionics—that in recent years have included Hetfield's stint on rehab, Ulrich's battles with Napster and the band's parting with long-time bass beater Jason Newsted—this special four-man unit remains as fresh, vibrant and focused as ever...despite enough success, notoriety and fame to last most humans a lifetime. "We've seen so much come and go during our career," Ulrich said. "When we came along metal was supposedly dead. Punk was still happening and anyone with long hair who played this kind of music was really viewed as an outcast. No major label in America would touch us back then. But that passed, just as every other major musical trend of the '80s, '90s and early 21st Century have passed. What it tells me is that really good rock music can survive anything—bands like ours are kind of like the cockroaches of the music world; *nothing* can kill us."

With their status as the most hallowed and historic American heavy metal band of all-time now more secure than ever, it indeed seems as if Metallica can defy virtually any career threats that may dare come their way. While, in all honesty, their latest studio and stage efforts bring forth little that is unfamiliar to any well-studied Metall-o-philes, there's no doubt that 2004 finds the band at the top of their craft. With the addition of Trujillo,

motivating a band of Metallica's historic stature to strive so hard to attain what is perhaps unattainable...perfection in their chosen craft? With the band having grossed an estimated \$250 million throughout their career from album sales, concert revenues and merchandising profits, it seems safe to say that monetary rewards are certainly no longer a substantial issue for the Metallimen. And with their place in the rock pantheon long-ago secured through the depth and breadth of their legendary hard rock creations, additional acclaim is perhaps the *last* item on the group's agenda.

Apparently what continues to motivate these now-over-40 rockers in their daily musical quests is their unquenched desire to take the rock and roll world on a trip unlike anything it's ever experienced before. It's a trip which perhaps only Metallica can effectively traverse.

"When we tour it's a lot of fun, but it's also all business," Ulrich said. "I think some of the fans would be surprised by how hard we work at everything we do. Just playing some of the new songs on stage takes incredible concentration. If we make it look easy, that's part of what we do. Believe me, it's not easy at all. But we've never been scared of working hard. I'd like to think that's one of the reasons our support has continued to grow over the years."



JAMES HETFIELD
HIT PARADER

DROPTBOX

MAKING THEIR STAND

BY JODI SUMMERS



Dropbox:
"Meeting
Sully turned
our lives
around."

It's great when you get a band that's young and fresh and excited about making music. It's a pleasure to deal with a group like Dropbox. "I'm a big fan of Dropbox," shares Godsmack frontman Sully Erna, who made Dropbox the first signing to his new label, Realign Records. "Their sound is a great blend of modern and classic rock with a very heavy and soulful bluesy vibe... They've got a style that's built to last." As you can hear on their self-titled debut release, vocalist John Kosco, guitarists Lee Richards and Joe Wilkinson, bassist Jim Preziosa and drummer Bob Jenkins, deliver iron-fisted backbeats and sprawling melodies with a rock bravado reminiscent of arena bands. Now all they need do is get the rest of their affairs in order. For this article we made several attempts but never got connected with Lee but John was ready and rehearsed. A long time **Hit Parader** reader, he had dreamed of this moment when his group would be in the magazine. And now, that truth was going to become reality.

Hit Parader: Do you feel like you've made it?

John Kosco: No, not yet.

HP: Then when?

JK: I'd say a gold record. I think about what's happening to me—and the chances of this happening to me—perhaps three minutes out of the day. The rest of the day it's just business. You'd think that being signed to a major label with amazing management, that everything is going to sparkle and shine, but it's work. It's something we're very passionate about, but it takes work from both sides.

HP: Are you finding the Dropbox experience satisfying?

JK: Yes I am. We're schooled. We've all been around in bands before, in the trenches. Jimmy has toured overseas with bands. Bobby played five nights a week in his band. We've all done our fair share of runs.

Now is the time for Dropbox. And believe me, we

know how lucky we are.

HP: How did it all happen for you?

JK: We'd been together about two years... I met Sully backstage at a show—and I didn't want to be that guy who comes up to someone famous at every show—so I had a friend hand him a demo. Sully called me a week later.

HP: That's amazing that he called you off your demo. What did Sully say impressed him about your demo?

JK: He called me up and said, "I think your voice is great. It's the Layne Staley to Jerry Cantrell thing." He was talking about Lee. That floored me. I pulled over on Route 80 in New Jersey, overlooking the City, and I said, "Oh my God, he gets it." And at that point, that was a career. I was like, "what do I say to this guy, how do I finish this conversation to continue it to see where it goes?" You know how quickly music success can come and go; this whole experience lasts

maybe five minutes, so we'll just keep our fingers crossed. There is no right or wrong as long as we believe in what we do. Sully introduced me to Lee, and 40 months later we were recording **Dropbox** with Dave Jerden in Burbank.

HP: Where did your musical influences come from for this record?

JK: We just wrote what felt right— music that is honest and genuine. The inspiration was the stuff we were listening to when we first met each other. I knew Bobby and Joey and Jimmy for years. We've all played in different bands in New Jersey. We met Lee two years ago. I was going through some pretty heavy times back then. I was upset about breaking up my other band, wanting to get somewhere with it. You know how frustrating that is. I had no other backup for life. I didn't really look at anything else to do. So I'm sitting here going, "I have no credit... I have my family and my friends to support me and a guitar and a microphone stand. What the hell am I going to do? I have to do this. I have to be successful at this."

There's a lot of material that really milks that material. As far as the feel itself, it really contrasts dark and bright. It's got to be diverse. Did Led Zeppelin and Queens of the Stone Age ever try to limit themselves?

HP: Which bands have influenced Dropbox's sound?

JK: I'd say Mountain, Lee would say Led Zeppelin and some of the others would say Sabbath— and there's a million bands that will say the

Durst, you've got Manson. They really bring it to the table as far as being a rock star goes, but I don't see myself with bling bling and all that stuff like that. I want to just be successful and be happy musically. I'd like people to remember us.

"We're well schooled— we've all been around the block."

same thing. We're not trying to be something we're not. I'm a huge Layne Staley fan; he was my biggest influence, vocally.

HP: When did you first realize you could sing?

JK: Since I can remember. My dad still plays in a rock band— Rockerbox. They're out of New Jersey— and he's 60. He plays left-handed bass guitar and sings like Leslie West, his idol. He used to put me to sleep with *Mississippi Queen*. I remember the smoky bars my dad used to play - the smell of it is still all in my nose— The P.A. system and the chrome microphone, I wanted all that ever since I can remember.

HP: Where would you like to see this album take you?

JK: We'd like to be remembered. I'd like to see it go somewhere. The music business is very different from what I thought it would be. Back in the '80s those were the rock stars. Here in 2004, you've got Fred

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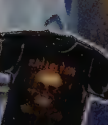
40541 AS I LAY DYING
Girl Sawblade Face



44417 ATREYU
Logo Vampire Girl



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



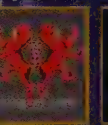
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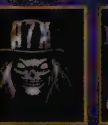
38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
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38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



38486 ATREYU
Skull Logo



44077 B.L. SOCIETY
Hangover Music



38486 B.L. SOCIETY
The Blessed Hitlode



43210 B.SABATH
1989 Group Photo



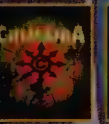
43517 B. THROUGH
Skull & Crossbones



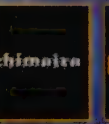
38383 CANNY CRIPSE
Bloody Logo



37122 C.O.F. BODIM
Follow The Reaper



44412 CHIMAIRA
Fuck Your Power Trip



39657 CHIMAIRA
Impossibility Reason



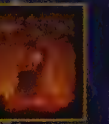
38752 CRY
Fuck You Logo



38171 DEASH
London Calling



40837 COLD
Year Of The Spider



44431 C.O.F. FLY
N.Y. State Logo



44227 DAMAGE PLAN
Group Photo



42565 D. KENNEDYS
Holiday in Cambodia



38383 DEFTONES
Stimuli Skull



38823 DEFTONES
Yellow Stimuli Logo



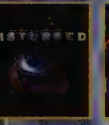
42317 DIMMU BORGIR
Armageddon Skull



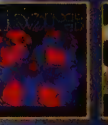
25450 DIMMU BORGIR
Norway



43342 DISTILLERS
Gibson SG Guitar



40941 DISTURBED
Eye Logo



43235 DOORS
Most Activated Group



33981 DOWN
Group Photo



28669 D. THEATER
Live Scenes



44606 D. POOL
Where Of Texas



44406 E. TIME I.D.E.
Hot Damn Girls



44110 FEAR FACTORY
Archetype Group



42117 FLAID
Endangered Species



41757 F.A.L.T. ASHES
The Fiction We Live



41625 FIFTH FRIEND
Way To Stream



43590 GIVE FORBID
Gone Forever



42083 GUNSMACK
Horizon Line Sun



40484 GUNSMACK
Hotsmack Group



41721 GUNS N' ROSES
Banner Logo



39784 HATEBREED
A Call For Blood



43281 HATEBREED
Logo Winter Angel



43108 HIM
Tribal Logo



43523 HINSA
Courtin' (I) played



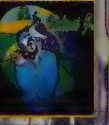
41740 I.C. NHO
Crown Logo



41117 IN FLAMES
Star Face



40221 INFLAMES
L.A. M. M. M. M.



41010 LA POSSE
Volcanic M. M. M.



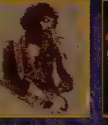
41806 IRON MAIDEN
Pledge Of Death



42610 IRON MAIDEN
Number Of The Beast



38512 IRON MAIDEN
Trooper



42081 JIM HENRIK
Shadow Art Of Jim



28427 JUDAS PRIEST
Scramming Weapons



44417 KULL-EN-GAGE
Sacred Heart



42477 KITTIE
Kiss Of Infamy



38940 KORN
Stripes' Girl



42306 KORN
Take A Look In Mirror



44416 K.M. KINGS
Fire It Up Logo



42008 LACUNA COIL
Group Photo



43076 LED ZEPPELIN
Tomb Stadium



44346 LINKIN PARK
Breaking Habit



43309 L. PRIESTS
Through Your Daughters



42879 L. SKYVRD
Skull & Crossbones



44435 MACHINE HEAD
Through The Ashes



40556 M. MANSON
Face Photo Bobble



40556 M. MANSON
Mosses Group



25446 MEGADETH
Prince Sells



42312 MEGADETH
S.F. Ex. So Good So



10766 METALLICA
Damage Inc.



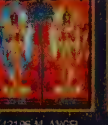
10558 METALLICA
Rich The Lightning



43070 METALLICA
Sponge Bob Group



17161 MISFITS
Horror Business



42196 M. ANGEL
Heretic



13384 MOTLEY CRUE
Girls Girls Girls



43270 MOTOGRATER
Ghost Posed In Gear



40861 MOTORHEAD
Classic England Skull



38891 MURDERDOLLS
Group Photo



43936 MY RAIN
The Horror Of Beauty



22737 N. INCH NAILS
Blue Cloud Logo



10566 N. INCH NAILS
Team A Self Train



38643 NIRVANA
Mark With Guitar



10605 NIRVANA
Smiley Face



39720 NOFX
The War On Errism



44430 NORMA JEAN
Scene Logo



39354 O. M. CHILD
Defiance Of Existence



39664 OPTH
Deliverance



36484 O. OSKOURNE
Jaws



41061 O. OSKOURNE
Skull & Crossbones



36470 PANTERA
Cowboys Metal Skull



38851 PANTERA
Death Dealer Card



28605 PANTHERA
Darkside



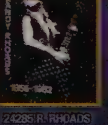
44415 P. THE WELLS
Naughty Little Angel



41143 RADIOWAVE
Pacific Coast



26500 RAMONES
Presidential Seal



24289 R. RHODS
Tribute Photo



43524 R. NEVER
Skull Logo



43246 ROB ZOMBIE
Sister Urge Zombie



43526 SENSES PAUL
Skull & Swords



43114 SEX PISTOLS
Bonazard England



42925 SHAD FALL
Destroyer False Metal



40403 SHAD FALL
Eating Emo Kids



42113 SIX F. UNDER
Bringer Of Blood



43093 SLAYER
Group Picture Live



44000 SLAYER
K.F.A. Coat Of Arms



43092 SLAYER
New Earth



38847 SLEPKNOT
Triple S Horned Skulls



44449 SLEPKNOT
Subliminal Masks



44448 SLEPKNOT
The Subliminal Verses



24984 SLEPKNOT
Classic Zoro



40057 SOILWORK
Figure Number Five



38655 SOULFLY
Call To Arms



44434 SOULFLY
Prophecy



27743 STATIC X
Machine



43845 S.O.E. Year Red
Crest Logo



42580 S. YOUNG LAD
Cherubs



10592 SUBLINE
Sun Logo



6447 SUPER RITUAL
Use Once Destroy



39124 T.E. CLOUSON
Cleveland Steamers



43183 TOOL
Singer Logo With Hat



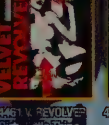
44069 TRAP
Unimpaired M.



40101 TW. TIO
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44594 UNLEASH
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44461 V. REVOLVER
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- 42114 MEFAVE TH Logo
- 20564 MISFITS Legacy Of Brutality
- 36321 MORBID ANGEL Logo XL Only
- 37718 NINE INCH NAILS Logo/Death
- 39665 OPIETH Logo/XL Only
- 36019 PANTERA Logo/Skull Logo
- 42189 PINK FLOYD Dark Side Of The Moon
- 36230 RANCID The Well-Bands Wings Logo
- 40850 RANCID And Out Come The Wolves
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- 44406 CRADLE OF FILTH Wymptastic/Sex/Sex
- 40939 DEF LEPPARD British Flag Paint Logo
- 42001 DIMMU BORGIR Death Cult/Armageddon
- 42534 HYPOCRISY Face & Wires/Tour 2003
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- 40980 LE ZEPPELIN Early Days Box Set Art
- 42720 L-SKYNRYD Sour, Mass, Whiskey Label
- 44245 MY RUIN Horror Of Beauty Group Photo
- 39190 NINE INCH NAILS White Logo
- 42629 OPIETH Deliverance In The Year Of Our Lord
- 34772 OZZY OSBOURNE Randy, Wings Tribute
- 40850 PANTERA And Out Come The Wolves
- 26513 PINK FLOYD Dark Side Of The Moon
- 43036 RADIOHEAD Pacific Coast
- 37580 RAMONES Presidential Seal/Hey Ho Let's Go
- 40876 RANCID/Crimson Ghost Logo
- 42314 SIX FEET UNDER Bringer Of Blood
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- 12268 IRON MAIDEN No Prayer On The Road
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- 44114 JED ZEPPELIN How The West Was Won
- 44119 LINKIN PARK Meteor
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- 12206 ME TALICA Ninja Skull Logo
- 44448 ME TALICA Pirate Skull/W/Swords
- 12207 ME TALICA Rock The Lightning
- 38844 MISFITS Legacy Of Brutality
- 38711 MURRAY KURT Cobain Closeup Portrait
- 12206 PANTERA Group Photo
- 37700 PINK FLOYD Dark Side Of The Moon
- 19781 RAGGED AGAINST MACHINE Fist
- 25957 ROB ZOMBIE Call Of The Zombie
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- 23877 JIMI HENDRIX American Flag Face Photo
- 25675 KORN 3-D Logo & Freak Logo
- 39179 LINKIN PARK Meteor Spray Paint Artist
- 17927 LYNRYD SKYNYRD Logo
- 42710 MISFITS Jumbo White Skull Logo
- 19666 NINE INCH NAILS Logo
- 38506 OZZY OSBOURNE Gold Logo
- 28534 PANTERA Flaming Skull Logo
- 28615 PINK FLOYD Dark Side Of The Moon
- 22170 RAMONES Presidential Seal Logo
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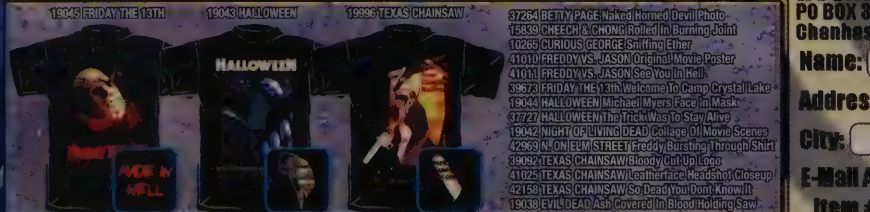
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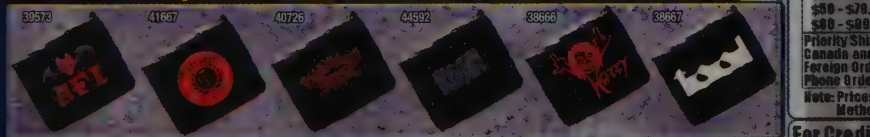
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BY DAVID VOLKER

SOIL: DIGGING DEEP

It was early in the afternoon when the members of Soil casually began wandering into their New York-based record label's expansive conference room. Amid the dramatic lighting and the impressively bold furniture, vocalist Ryan McCombs, guitarist Adam Zadel, guitarist Shaun Glass, bassist Tim King and drummer Tom Schofield settled in to enjoy their lunches (sandwiches ordered in from a near-by deli) and discuss the details of Soil's second disc, **ReDefine**. It was easy to tell that this was a contented lot—a band that had earned their rock and roll stripes with a superlative debut album, **Scars**, and a world tour that saw them hit the road with some of the biggest bands in rock, including Ozzy Osbourne and Rob Zombie. Now they were set to take their burgeoning rock and roll careers to the next logical level... and between bites of turkey on rye, we got the inside scoop on the latest happenings in the world of Soil.

Hit Parader: How different was it making your second major label album as compared to your first?

Ryan McCombs: It was entirely different on just about every level. The way we approached writing the album was very different—as was the actual manner in which we recorded.

We're a band that's built on songs. Not a lot of other bands can honestly say that. So

when we go to make an album, we need more than a

lot of energy and anger—the material has to be there for us. The whole structure of the album is different because I was living in Indiana when the rest of the band was working on the music in Chicago. They'd overnight me the tapes, and then I'd sit by myself working on the lyrics. That approach really gives this album a lot of its depth.

Adam Zadel: We're never concerned about showing a surprising side of our music to the fans. Maybe they think they know what to expect from us because of **Scars**, but we like to throw 'em a curve every now and then. In some ways **ReDefine** has the same kind of overwhelming power as the last album. But we worked very hard to show how we've grown as a band.

into play with this album. It's just taken on a life of its own.

AZ: I think you can tell that we're all great friends who are enjoying every minute of this. Unfortunately, that seems to be the exception among a lot of today's bands. So if you're asking me if we're happy about where we are, I'd have to say yes. If you're asking if we want to get a lot bigger thanks to

"We're never concerned about showing a surprising side of our music to the fans."

ReDefine, the answer to that one would be an even bigger yes.

HP: Is there one particular cut on **ReDefine** that stands out for you?

SG: I like 'em all, but one of the songs that I admit having a very fond place in my heart for is *Obsession*. That one started out just as a guitar riff I had been working on, and after we finished working on it, the song had evolved into this big, Tool-like monster. It has almost an epic quality to it, which is something very different from anything else we've done before.

RM: I admire anyone who can pour their hearts into making music like this and then choose one

"The confidence you have with a second album is light years beyond what you previously had."

That was very important to us.

HP: Ryan, you mentioned that you wrote the lyrics for this album when you were away from the rest of the band. Why?

RM: That's just the way it was at that time—nothing really to be read into it. I was home spending some time with my family. It gave Adam a chance to try some things vocally, and it allowed me to have a different perspective on the music that was being written. It's hard for me to get into the space I need to get to write lyrics when I'm surrounded by a lot of people and a lot of things that are going on. I've learned that it's better for me to do it the way I'm comfortable, and then bring it all together when I'm ready.

Shaun Glass: One of the great things about this band is that everyone is involved in all aspects of the music. There isn't just one or two guys who take control of everything. So when the four of us are together working on the music, it's fine if Ryan isn't there all the time.

We know he'll do his thing the right way and when it's time for him to come to the studio to record, it's all gonna be great.

HP: Soil established a solid foothold with **Scars**. Are you satisfied with where the band is in 2004?

Tim King: Any time that you're able to make the album you want, tour the world, and enjoy a fair degree of success, you've got to be satisfied. But that doesn't mean that we aren't more motivated than ever to keep pushing ourselves.

Everything we've learned over the last few years has come

over the others. I know it's a cliché, but these songs really are our children. It's impossible to choose one of your children over another. Each and every one has a special place for us and represents something unique.

HP: *Halo* played such a major role in the band's success last time. Do you see a certain song from this album performing a similar task for **ReDefine**?

RM: That song has come to mean so much to this band. The reaction it continues to draw from fans is amazing. There's no feeling in the world like standing on stage and having thousands of people sing along with you. Is there a song like that on this album? I hope so, but I don't know if that's for us to say. The fans are the ones who made *Halo* so special, and they're the ones who will make the new songs special as well.

"One of the great things about this band is that everyone is involved in all aspects of the music."

HP: Did you have the chance to play any of the songs on **ReDefine** live prior to recording them?

AZ: We did have the chance to play a few of them. There were some songs, like *Pride*, that we had actually recorded a bit earlier, and they fit very well into the set. As we go on the road now, I figure we'll gradually add more and more songs from this album into the set. At first we'll probably only play a few, but as we go along, I'd eventually like to see at least half the songs in the set come off of **ReDefine**.



RYAN
MCCOMBS
HIT PARADER

MUDVAYNE

METAL MEN UNMASKED

BY P.J. MERKLE

It's been a strange year for Mudvayne. During that time this Midwestern heavy metal unit dropped their trademark face paint and turned their focus squarely upon their highly cerebral musical output. It's a calculated, if not downright risky move. Each of the band's previous two discs, *L.D. 50* and *The End of All Things to Come*, have sold in excess of 500,000 copies, while their outrageous appearance has garnered them numerous magazine covers and extensive MTV coverage. Yet vocalist Chad Gray, guitarist Greg Tribbett, bassist Ryan Martinie and drummer Matt McDonough came to the realization about a year ago that it was time to drop the more controversial, headline-grabbing aspects of their approach and turn everyone's attention towards the complex brand of hard rock that has become this unit's second most famous calling card.

"There's no question that a lot of people were drawn to us because of the way we dressed when we went on stage," Gray said. "But we began to realize that too many of those same people weren't really getting into what we wanted them to absorb—the music and lyrics we were creating. When the makeup and costumes added to the music, that was fine. When we started to feel that they were detracting from it, that was something else."

In light of their decision to cast aside their shock-rock garb and place a more streamlined face on their musical attack, Mudvayne knew they were putting their career squarely on the line. Yet when they hit the road as part of Metallica's 2003 *Summer Sanitarium* package, they did so with their faces bare and their stage props held to a stark mini-

"It was time to change the focus away from us and onto the music."

mum. Suddenly fans were forced to listen to the mathematically precise odes that this highly unpredictable band brought forth—and the results were amazing. Indeed, to the eyes and ears of many in attendance, Mudvayne "stole the show" from their more illustrious metallic comrades.

"It was a great tour for us," Gray said. "That was especially true because it exposed us—both figuratively and literally—to a huge audience. It was the perfect vehicle for us at that point in our career. But once it was over, we knew we needed to take stock and prepare for the next album—which we know is going to be the most important of our lives."

As Gray explained, after taking a few months off at the end of 2003, the band quickly regrouped and began focusing their considerable energies on the creation of their still-untitled third album. The Vayne chose to retreat to a secluded ranch in Northern California, where they converted the garage into a makeshift studio from which all of Mudvayne's new music is emanating. Indeed, after only three weeks in their out-of-the-way locale, they had completed work on half the tracks destined for their next disc—which is currently scheduled for a late fall release.

"We approached this album with some very clear goals in mind," McDonough said. "It's a strange contradiction, but it can be very liberating to set limitations on creativity as long as you don't let those limitations define you. It frees up a lot of creative energy when you stop pulling an idea in fifty different directions

and start pushing in one."

Still, despite the degree of musical acumen that Mudvayne have displayed on each of their previous chart-topping releases, many fans—as well as many within the rock industry—are wondering how the band's radical change in appearance will impact their following. The fact is that for many Vayne supporters, this unit's exotic trappings and unusual stage names—Chug, Gugg, Spag and Ru-D—have defined this bizarre unit from Day One. Their "alien" wardrobes, their netherworldly costumes and their horrific face paint have all worked to create the Mudvayne Mystique—yet all have been put in moth balls in favor of the stripped-down, no-nonsense, pedal-to-the-metal, lean-and-mean style the group now favors.

"It was time to change things up," Gray said. "I think in some ways we got caught up in a quagmire of our own design. The dark cartoon-like quality of what we had created became the thing that everyone related to—often at the expense of the music. That wasn't something we could accept."

It seems more than a bit ironic that Mudvayne should have fallen into this theatrical web of their own making. After all, this one-time shock rock contingent ranks among the more intellectually stimulating bands in the entire hard rock spectrum. With past lyrical explorations delving into topics ranging from alien invasions to mathematical metaphysics, the frustration Mudvayne feel towards their uni-dimensional acceptance by the metal community is quite understandable. Quite simply, this

quartet is far more than the blood-oozing, semi-satanic, quasi-comical outfits that so often adorned their frames. This is a unit that wants to make you think as well as react.

"I've got to say that cutting back on the makeup has saved us a lot of time," Gray explained. "Deciding what we wanted to do each night in terms of stage presentation was very time-consuming. And anyway, some of those costumes—especially my 'bunny suit'—began to really stink. You wouldn't believe the smell. So I'm just as happy not to have to deal with that anymore."

Of course, a key question surrounding Mudvayne is how their legion of fans will respond to this rather radical change in the group's artistic perspectives. After all, the Vayne's look was the key ingredient that served to separate them from the rest of the hard rock horde. And while their over-the-top approach continually drew unwanted comparisons to their fellow Midwestern rockers, Slipknot, these four insist that the Knot's return to recent prominence has had no impact on their own creative decisions.

"No, we didn't drop the makeup because of Slipknot," Gray said. "But we did do it in part to distance ourselves from what has fast become a parody of what it was originally intended to be. I think what always happens in music is that as soon as something comes along that's viewed as both 'different' and 'commercially viable' by the forces within the music industry, they do their best to subvert it. Maybe it is time to get the focus back where it belongs."



CHAD GRAY
HIT PARADER

In some ways, it's kind of hard to believe that Rob Halford was ever not part of Judas Priest. The legacy created by this hallowed heavy metal unit during their peak years from the mid-'70s until the early '90s will invariably stand the test of rock and roll time. But for nearly a dozen years following Halford's defection from the Priest camp in 1992, guitarist Glenn Tipton, bassist Ian Hill and guitarist K.K. Downing continued to rock on. Their music may not have made quite as big an impression on the metal masses, but they kept the monumental Priest Beast alive and well, almost as if they sensed that one day their persistence would be rewarded. And when Halford returned to the fold late in 2003, it signaled the start of a new era in the three-decade life span of Judas Priest—prompting fans, both near and far to impatiently wait to hear what this legendary unit would come up with next. That wait will soon come to an end when the band releases their first disc together in more than a decade. In the mean time, these Metal Gods have been keeping busy along the *Ozzfest* trail where this reunited quintet is celebrating 30 years of making amazing metal music. Recently we spoke to Halford about his triumphant return to the Judas Priest camp.

Hit Parader: How long did it take for the old Priest "magic" to return?

Rob Halford: Believe it or not, it was instantaneous.

As soon as I sat down with Glenn and K.K. to begin putting together some song ideas, it was like the years melted away. It didn't seem like we hadn't

been together in a creative sense in more than a dozen years. It was an immediate return to Judas Priest—but perhaps with more focus and more commitment than ever before. It truly was magical. In a way, it was the exact manner that I had envisioned it happening in my head countless times when we were apart. But this was one of the few cases in life when reality lived up to those dreams. As soon as we started working we couldn't stop. We went for two months straight, seven days a week.

"The magic I felt when we started working again was better than I had hoped."

HP: And how would you classify the results of those efforts... the songs on your new album?

RH: I won't say I'm surprised because I knew that once we all got back together the results would be amazing, but I can say that I'm totally satisfied, and incredibly enthusiastic, about what we've created. It is classic Priest from first note to last, but at the same time, it's also very fresh and exciting. We know what the fans expect from us—and we know what we expect from ourselves. I honestly believe we've more than met all of those expectations.

HP: We've seen the case with some metal bands that their trademark sound—especially vocally—changes with time. Can the Halford Voice still hit those amazing notes?

RH: I'm proud to say that it can—and it can do so perhaps better than ever. I was never one to abuse my voice, but I've learned to take even better care of it over the years. But the simple fact is that I'm still the Metal God (laughs.) How could I not be able to deliver the goods?

HP: Who made the first overture about getting Priest's "classic" lineup back together?

RH: I had sent a letter to the band about three years ago just trying to make things right. It wasn't an attempt at a reformation, it was more my way of trying to get back in their good graces. These people had been my friends, by "brothers in metal" if you may, for most of my life. The idea that we weren't communicating after sharing so much just didn't make sense. So I attempted to bridge that gap, and they were very receptive to the idea. There were still some old wounds that needed to be discussed and given time to heal. But once that initial door was open, that wasn't a difficult process.

HP: You've recently been on the road with your fellow Birmingham natives Black Sabbath as part of *Ozzfest*. How did you feel about that?

RH: It's been an incredible experience for us. And I believe it may have been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for metal fans as well. When I learned that it was going to be Sabbath on the bill with us it was a great thrill because as you mentioned, not only are they one of the truly seminal metal bands, but they come from the same home town as us. Sabbath started out in 1969, and the first version of Priest was formed in 1971. To think that all these years later two bands from the same neighborhood would be back together and touring as part of the greatest metal spectacular of all-time is quite wondrous.

HP: Some people have speculated that Priest might have preferred touring with Ozzy Osbourne alone as the tour headliner.

RH: That's not true at all. When we signed on for *Ozzfest* Ozzy was the announced headliner, and it's true that it was only changed to Sabbath in May. But that only made it more exciting for us. Yes, I've heard the talk about how Priest's 30th Anniversary may be overshadowed by Sabbath's 35th. But that's not the way we think. This has been the ultimate metal showcase, and we're so proud to be part of it.

HP: You didn't perform any new songs during *Ozzfest*, why?

RH: We were tempted, but we decided against it. We only had about 75 minutes on stage each night, and since we're celebrating 30 years of Priest history, and we have such an extensive catalog of material to draw from, the concept of including new material—no matter how proud we may be of it—just didn't seem right. We wanted it to be a true "Best of Priest" set, with one classic song merging right into the next. There will be time for us to play those new songs, I promise that.

HP: Speaking of which, when might we next see Priest on American shore?

RH: America has always been so good to Priest, our true home away from home. The album comes out in October, and around that time we will launch a massive world tour that will spend a great deal of time in America. I can't get into too many details at this point because, in all honesty, a lot of those details have yet to be finalized. But I can promise that it will be an evening that Priest fans will not soon forget.

JUDAS PRIEST
HALFORD
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BY ERIC NASH

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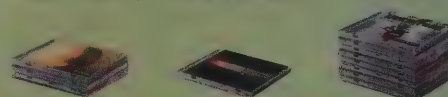
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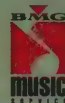
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ROB HALFORD
HIT PARADER

Slipknot

THIS IS NOT THE END

BY
AMY SCIARRETTO

Long before the release of their latest rabble-rousing disc, **Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)**, fans and detractors alike were predicting the end of the nine-headed force of heavy metal nature and culture known as Slipknot. 2001's *Iowa* was not the smash many expected, and members of Slipknot took to making comments about one another in the press and splintered into side projects. Perhaps most notably among these was frontman Corey Taylor's Stone Sour, which scored a monster hit with the decidedly un-Slipknot ballad, *Bother*. But there was also drummer Joey Jordison's Murderdolls, which forged its own take on Motley Crue style glam punk as well as percussionist Shawn "Clown" Crahan's eclectic unit To My Surprise. But Slipknot has nine members, and ultimately,

Slipknot also has nine lives. It's now abundantly clear to anyone with eyes and ears that Slipknot isn't going anywhere except back to the top.

When *Hit Parader* caught up with Jordison, the anchor behind the Slipknot sound, he adamantly and confidently squashed and stamped out the rumors that the 'Knot is coming undone and that **V.3(TSV)** will serve as the band's swan song. When we chatted, Jordison was coming off not only his band's performance at England's famed Donington Festival, but also as the one-time-only fill-in drummer for Metallica while Lars Ulrich fell ill. So, naturally, he was in super spirits and ready to chat about that thing that is Slipknot.

COREY TAYLOR

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO



JOEY JORDISON
HIT PARADER



CLOWN
HIT PARADER

PHOTO: EDDIE MALLUK

Hit Parader: Before we delve deep into Slipknot, you must tell our readers. What was it like to play with Metallica in front of thousands and thousands of people in Europe?

Joey Jordison: I know people want to know how that was. It was absolutely amazing. There are no words to put it into. I can't even describe how it came about, and how I did the whole set and finished the show. I grew up listening to that band and playing those songs, and I was in cover bands before forming my original acts. Lars has never missed a show for Metallica, and when I got to step in for him, in front of Donington out of all places, it is indescribable. I was glad to help out and all the hard work must have paid off.

HP: Were you nervous?

JJ: I wasn't nervous at all. It was so big, that I could not be nervous. It was beyond that. It was pointless to be nervous. Since it was a fresh experience, I was excited. It was brand new. All eyes were on me, so I had to deliver. There was no other choice.

HP: Now onto Slipknot... The album is out, it's selling off the shelves, and the Jagermeister tour was sold out on every single date. You're headlining the side stage of *Ozzfest*. Did you expect fans to be so ravenous about the return of Slipknot?

HP: I never have been nervous about losing fans or worrying about what people think. It is beyond an honor to have people respond the way they have. Our fans are loyal, dedicated, and in tune with what we are doing. There will be no bands like us, before us, or after us, and that is why our fans don't go anywhere. Our lyrics speak to our fans, and we try to stay connected to our fans in our music, during the shows, and by talking to them after. We speak to these kids in many ways, and as long as you do that, you can't go wrong.

HP: People were writing Slipknot off as a one trick pony, and saying that fan bases sometimes grow up and grow out of a band like Slipknot. But Slipknot fans have remained loyal to a fault. What do you think that says about the band and the fans?

JJ: We are a one of a kind band, and we're not a joke. From our music to our live show, it's

100% dedication to make sure that it's quality control and nothing is shortchanged. I think we are the only nine people who can come up with the sound called Slipknot and it's a legendary band. We are on fire, but we attribute that to our fans. We go out to own the stage, and we never come down below 100%. Half the show is the crowd; the other half of the show is us. Without the maggots, our show is not complete.

HP: People are still saying this is the last Slipknot album. Is it?

JJ: That is bull. That is old news. That is in the past. Some people in the band might have felt that at one time, but we're growing up, living together, and we're maturing. We missed each other when we took the time off. We missed the band and that is in the past. There will be other Slipknot records. You can bet on it.

HP: During the "hiatus," you were active with Murderdolls, and Corey had Stone Sour. Those bands obviously go on the back burner while the two of you devote your time to Slipknot. How do you deal with that? How do your other band mates feel?

JJ: They're not side projects. They are other bands... full bands. But Slipknot got us to where we are and without Slipknot, we can't do those other bands and we remember that. I cannot wait to be with the Murderdolls again, but my focus is Slipknot and Slipknot only at this point. And the other members of our bands know that and knew that going in. Those members are happy for Slipknot and where Slipknot is at right now. They are like family and are completely behind us, so they are not worrying about waiting around. They watch us play and come to the shows. Those bands will happen in their time. We sweat into this new Slipknot record, and it's time to reign again.

HP: Speaking of that, what did Rick Rubin do for Slipknot's sound? He's worked with so many legends, including the Beastie Boys, Slayer, Johnny Cash, System Of A Down, to name a few.

JJ: Rick helped us realize that we can play other type of stuff and keep it Slipknot without losing heaviness. He knows the talent in the

band. He didn't change any arrangements and let us be the band we wanted to be. All nine guys made the record happen.

HP: Some of the more extreme fans are whining and complaining about acoustic guitars being on a Slipknot album! It's a shock for them.

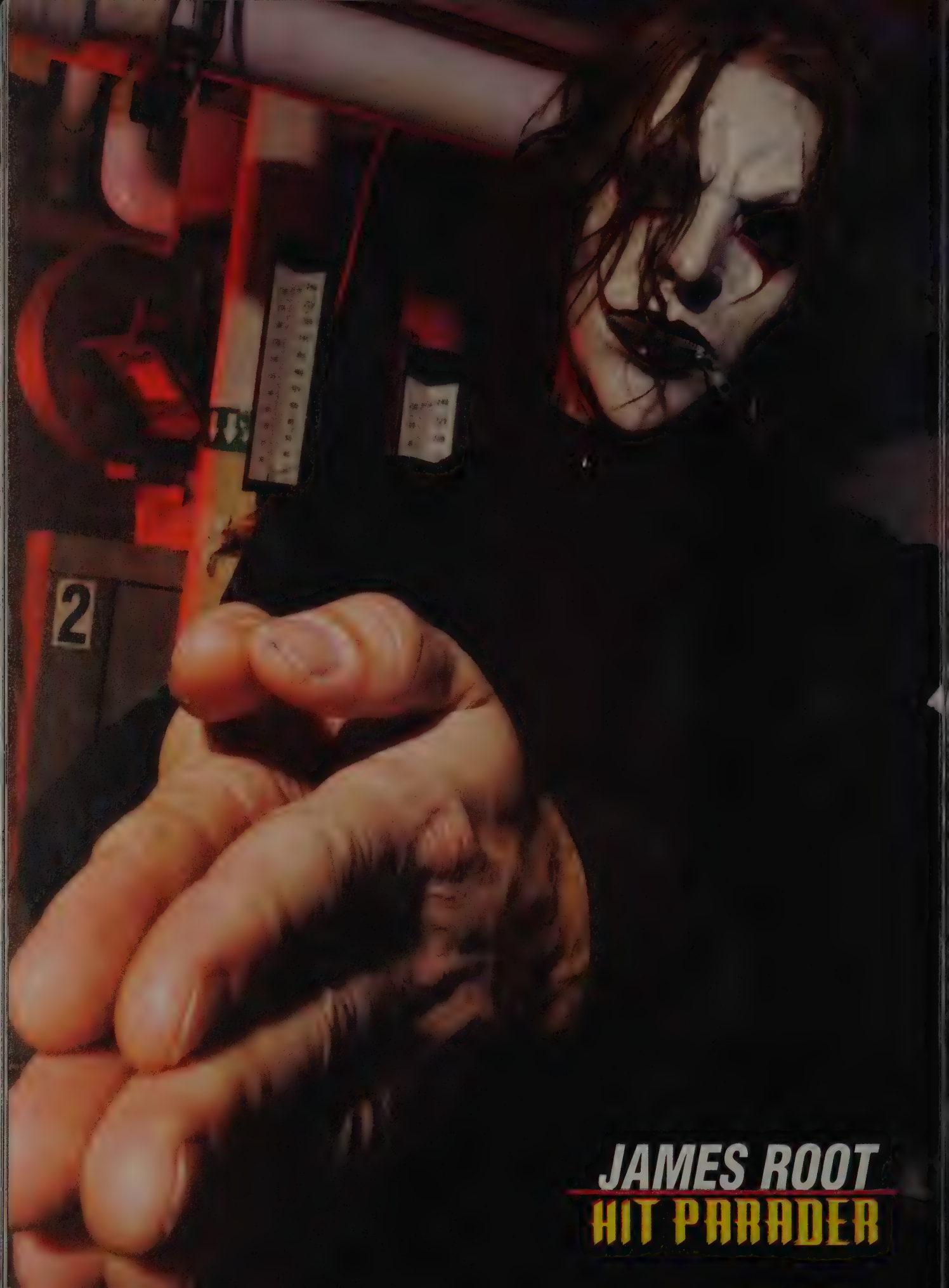
JJ: They didn't expect that, because other albums did not have any acoustic guitars. But always expect the unexpected from Slipknot.

"We knew that we had to shut everyone up, everyone who was predicting our demise. Slipknot will always deliver. This is the defining album in our career."

We can pull anything off and still make it sound like Slipknot. I have heard the reviews about *Vermillion, Pt. 2*, which mention that there are no heavy guitars in the song. But you know what? It's still dark, and it's still very Slipknot in its aura, texture, and feeling. You can tell it's Slipknot within the first three seconds of the song, even before Corey starts singing. It's almost like a movie, this album. You have to listen from start to finish. It's like you can't listen to it unless you are going to listen to it all the way through. It's not a 'skip track' album. The way the chords move, it's like a soundtrack to a certain day or a year to someone who is in tune with what we did on this album. We went away and did other projects and that was the best possible thing that could have happened to help this new album. We knew that we had to shut everyone up, everyone who was predicting our demise. Slipknot will always deliver. This is the defining album in our career. We are able to wipe out the new metal text, and show that there are one of the finest bands on the planet.

HP: Vol. 3 (*The Subliminal Verses*) could be your "Black" album, to reference Metallica again!

JJ: [Laughs] The ultimate challenge, as I said before, is that you have to listen to it all the



2

JAMES ROOT
HIT PARADER

way through. There is never a dull moment on this record, and some bands strive for that and might never achieve it. I'd like to think this is our **Master Of Puppets** or **Among The Living** or **Reign In Blood**. We are so proud. Bands always tell you stuff to hype their new album, saying the cliché stuff like 'This is our best album and we're getting along better than ever,' but the proof is there. It's our most creative and our oddest sounding record, as well as our best-written album. We are getting along. We missed the band, and we missed the fans, and we missed the movement that is Slipknot. It was fresh again, and we are out for blood, like we were in 1999 when we first came out. We got it back, and we're happy.

HP: Let's talk about some individual songs on the album. I love the drum march in *Blister Exists*. It doesn't sound like anything we've ever heard, even on a Slipknot record, which you can always count on for layers of sound.

JJ: Thank you. On this album, there is no cursing, and we have definitely written more memorable stuff than we ever had in the past. *Duality* has the most memorable chorus.

HP: Sounds like you are making the album's points through the music, not just the sheer aggression or force of cuss words.

JJ: And it was not conscious. This record would have happened with or without Stone Sour or Murderdolls. But this album would not be as good as it is if we didn't take time off. *Duality* is our heaviest single. It has the heaviest riff.

Listen to it. The main riff is heavier than anything on *Wait And Bleed* and *Left Behind*, and it's a way better written song. It's heavier. The part in the middle is so heavy and crushing. Listen close, don't compare to it to the past, and realize how heavy our third album is.

HP: We're not arguing. It's heavy in a dark way. It's not heavy in a bash you over the head way.

JJ: It's melodic, and the melodies are well placed. It's melodic when it needs to be. It's all movements and dynamics. And we are better songwriters.

HP: It's easy to compare **Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)** to Stone Sour on initial listens because of the vocals, but so much more going on underneath Corey's vocals. There are layers, textures, nuances of sound that are totally removed from Stone Sour. Do you get a lot of Stone Sour comparisons?

JJ: We don't get a lot of comparisons. A lot of people that like Murderdolls can't stand Slipknot and vice versa and that is good, because they shouldn't be compared. Stone Sour is not Slipknot. I'm not taking anything away from Stone Sour, I love what Corey has done with that band, but it's more stripped down, heavy rock. This Slipknot album showcases everyone's talent. All nine guys are separated, and you can hear all the percussion, all

of the samples, and the DJ. The only similarity between Stone Sour and Slipknot is the voice. If people assume that the new album is going to sound like Stone Sour, then they are missing out on a great world of other soundscapes because they only listen to the surface and never break through. You have to listen deep. Slipknot is not a surface band, and neither is this album.

HP: What is your favorite track?

JJ: I don't know. It's a full album thing for me, a true religious experience when I listen to it. I don't pick tracks apart. I made an album I love listening to, and it is the album of my life. I can

lighter records in the future. But we went the opposite way and made a heavier album. It served its purpose, but now it is a different time, and we're expanding on the strength of the band. It's pointless not to utilize our strengths and talents.

HP: How do you survive the million-degree weather wearing those suits and masks?

JJ: You sweat when you perform, and the suits and masks undoubtedly magnify that effect. You harness it, and then you channel it through the instrument. Being on stage is like being in a prison. It's pain, dude. No one will ever experience it unless they go on stage. You

SLIPKNOT



"We missed the band, we missed the fans, and we missed the movement that is Slipknot."

never pick a single track.

HP: There are nine of you. It seems like you run the band like a democracy in order to get stuff done.

HP: Look at it this way: we've been touring since the end of March and we can't wait to get on the road. We were not dreading it. Knowing that the tour was entirely sold out prior to the tour even starting is a testimony to the band's legacy. We loved being Slipknot again, and seeing our front row fans in tears because they were so happy to see us on stage again! We have grown up and we learned how to live with other people in the band and shut up. It's all original nine guys! We're back on one tour bus! We're back together. If people choose to think we are at each other's throats to make themselves happy, then do it. Go ahead and think that. We don't care. We know that we're getting along better than we have since 2000. And that's the facts.

HP: Looking back at *Iowa*, how do you feel about that album?

JJ: It was a transitional period for the band. *Iowa* was a brutal record. It served its purpose. People thought after the success of the self-titled album that we would make

can go on stage wearing a mask and play wearing a mask, but I'm going on stage with eight other guys wearing masks, and making sure that I am on my sound, making sure I am giving all of my energy to the crowd. I am doing the same thing to the other eight guys in the band. It's like a prison. Our band is militant. We're not like, 'Okay, we're off. We had an off show, so it's no big deal.' We'll hear it after the show, if we're off, from other members of the band, the motto is: 'You better be on tonight.' Every night. Yeah, sure, it's hot, but we thrive off the pain and it becomes apparent in the performance. It's always been a part of our band since 1996.

HP: So, what are your long term plans?

JJ: We're busy for another year. We're road dogs and we want to take this album to the furthest possible place.

HP: What bands you are listening to right now?

JJ: Mortis, Mayhem, Peaches, Murderdolls demos, and the new Slipknot.

HP: Any famous last words?

JJ: Thanks to the fans because they make us go around. Without them, we don't go around.

Slipknot



MASSIVE



TOUR

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2004

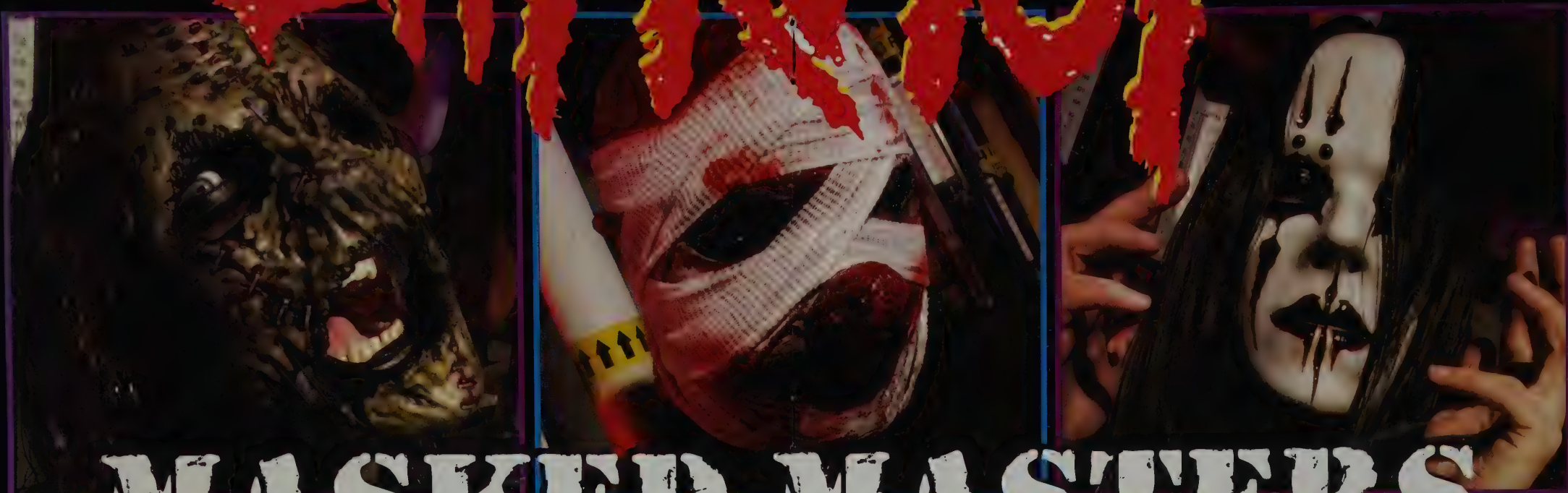
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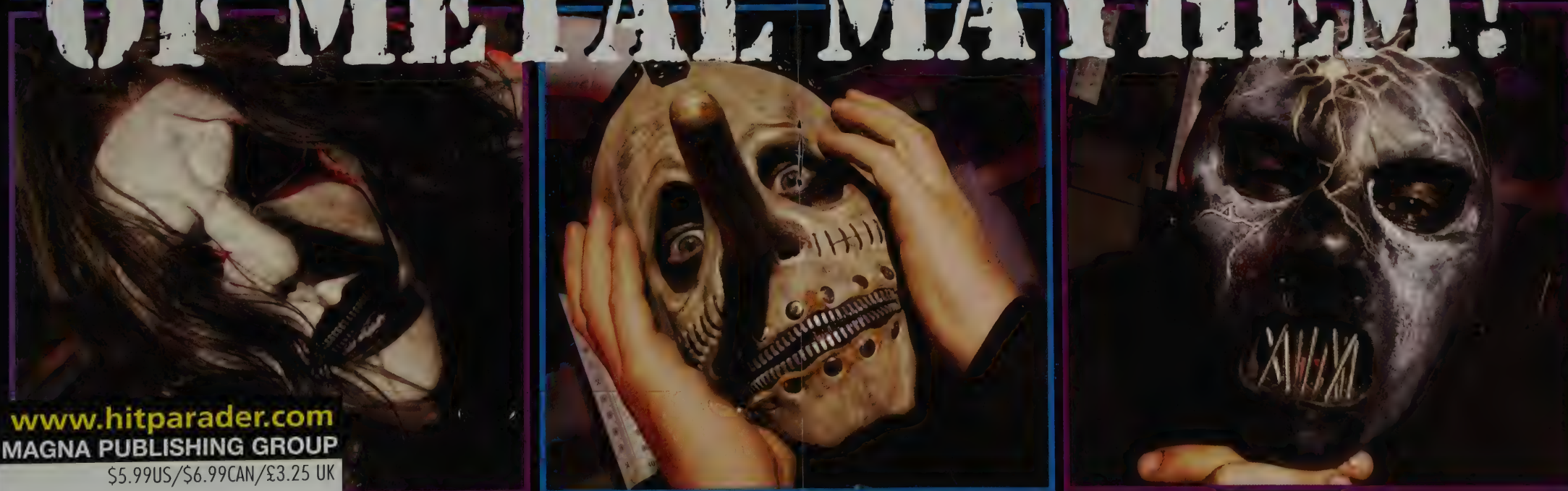
Slipknot



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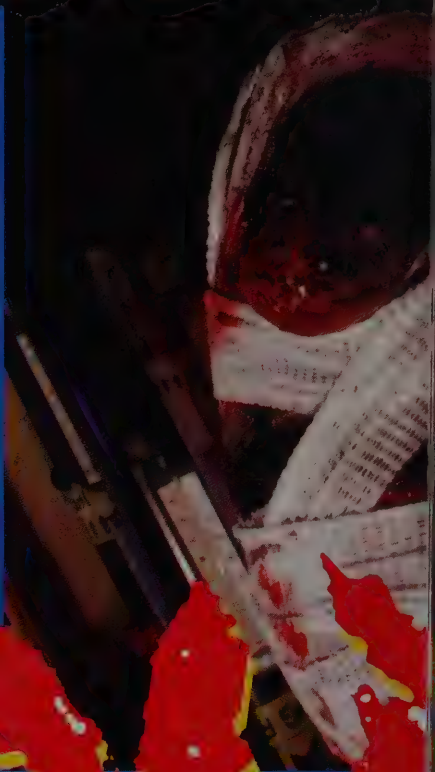
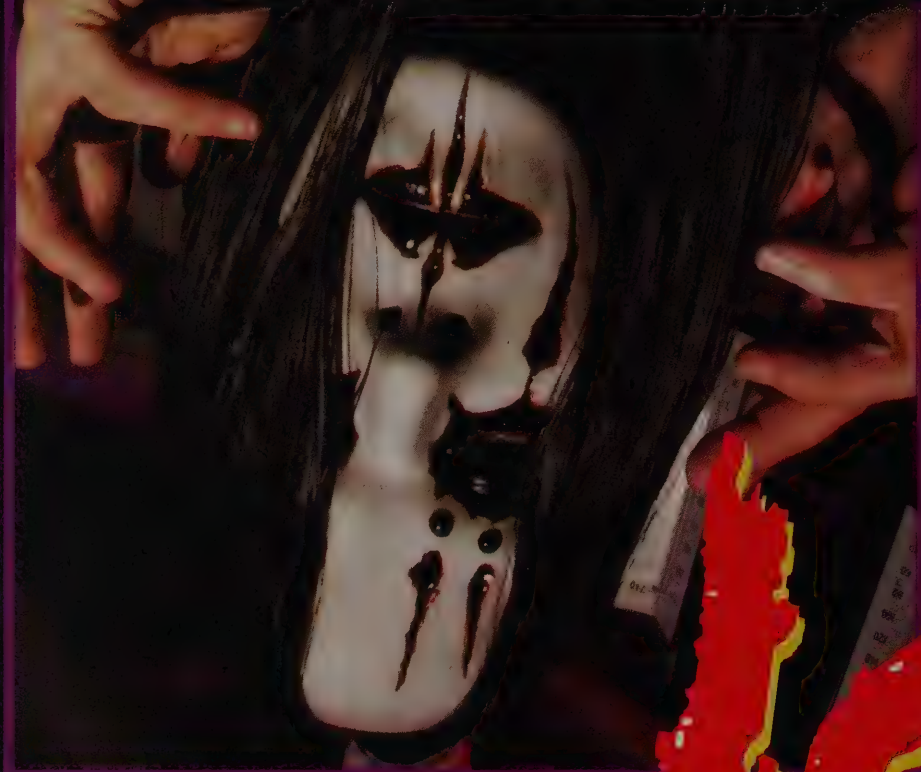
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HIT PARADER



VELVET REVOLVER

SUPERSTAR ATTRACTION

BY ROB ANDREWS

"When we heard that Scott was free to tour, you couldn't wipe the smiles off our faces."

We've all heard so much about Velvet Revolver for so long, that this high-profile supergroup found itself in the strange position of almost seeming like "old news" even before their debut album, *Contraband*, came out. Such a notion didn't necessarily bring a smile to the faces of guitarist Slash, vocalist Scott Weiland, bassist Duff McKagan, drummer Matt Sorum and rhythm guitarist Dave Kushner, but in all honesty, it didn't make 'em lose a minute's sleep, either. With a grand total of over 60 years of rock and roll experience housed within their collective musical souls, these been-there, done-that rockers aren't about to let any negative notion cloud their shiny-bright musical existence.

"People did start talking about us a little too early," McKagan said. "We were in a lot of magazines—even on the cover of magazines—six months before the album ever came out. It almost made it seem like this album was old by the time it finally arrived. It was kind of funny. People were asking if this was our *second* album. But we've all learned to deal with stuff like that. It's great that so many people are interested in us and what we're doing. Now it's up to us to show that all the interest is justified."

Yes, it is time for these former members of Guns 'N' Roses and the Stone Temple Pilots to take the initial interest shown in them and turn it into a cottage industry. With the immediate and overwhelming response given to *Contraband*, Velvet Revolver has emerged as an instant star-studded force on the contemporary music playing field. The hard-driving, yet eminently listenable brand of rock and roll fury created by this new-age supergroup has drawn instant comparisons to great bands ranging from Aerosmith and the Stones to, inevitably, the aforementioned G 'N R. But the apparent fact of the matter is despite all of these highly favorable tips of the musical hat, Velvet Revolver is a band apart. That's a fact that Slash wanted to drum home loud and clear.

"We're not trying to recreate Guns 'N' Roses or any other band," the guitarist

said. "We're doing what we do with a totally unique set of individuals. This is great rock and roll music, and rock and roll is timeless. All you can do is try to make music that turns you on."

Sometimes that's a lot more difficult than it may appear. Finding the right people to play with, and the right opportunity to present what you're doing isn't easy. So that's why I'm so excited about this band. This is my chance to make music that I enjoy with people who share my passion. It's when you develop the attitude that you've got to make music a certain way in order to fit in and keep up with everyone else that your music stands the chance of getting corrupted. Our focus has stayed on doing what we like—and what we feel comfortable doing—and then hoping for the best."

Despite the inherent problems caused by Weiland's well-documented recent personal problems, this star-packed unit has bravely forged ahead, creating an instant legacy for overwhelming guitar fury and snarling vocal passions. For Velvet Revolver, it sometimes seems that dealing with outside distractions is as familiar as an old pair of jeans—though they do admit that they'd much prefer to have everyone's focus revert to VR's music rather than their personal lives. But whether their headline-grabbing status occurs due to their on-stage histrionics or their off-stage miscalculations, it seems as if this talented crew now has everything in its proper perspective.

"All you can do is try to put everything else aside and just focus on the music," Weiland said. "There's no way I can deny that this hasn't been a tough year for me. Most of that stems from my personal life—I went through a painful divorce, and it brought out the weakness in my personality. Narcotics seemed like a good, quick solution to my problems. Obviously they weren't. Thankfully, the guys in this band have been an incredible support group for me. They've been there themselves, so there was never any finger pointing or guilt trips. They weren't there to judge me, they were there to support me, and I'll always be incredibly thankful for that."

With their debut single, *Slither*, already heating up the MTV and radio

airwaves, it seems as if everything is beginning to fall into place for Velvet Revolver. Of course, there was serious doubt last April (when the video was filmed) that Weiland would even be able to partake in the shooting due to his ongoing legal problems. But apparently the judge overlooking his latest run-in with the law was so pleased with the singer's progress, that he not only freed him from "house arrest" but provided more-than-a-glimmer of hope that Weiland would soon be allowed to join his band-mates on the tour trail.

"That's what we want—everything to be put behind us so that we can tour without anyone or anything looking over our shoulder," McKagan said. "We've gone through a lot of this stuff with Scott, and we've done whatever we can to get him focused in a better direction. We even got him into the martial arts in an attempt to get his mind in a different place. We all believe in him, and we know he's going to do everything in his power to keep himself in a good place and help this band achieve all that we think it can."

Despite any distractions Weiland's off-stage predilections may have caused, there can now be now doubt about the degree of impact that Velvet Revolver has begun to make on the rock and roll world. Loud, proud and in-yer-face, these time-tested musicians seem primed and ready to take on any challenge that may be cast before them. Indeed, with the music scene in a rock and roll "revival" mode thanks to the success of upstarts like the Darkness and Jet, could there possibly be a better time for Velvet Revolver to come along and show us all how *real* rock and roll is supposed to be played?

"We've never been very good at trying to play nice and fit in with everyone else," McKagan said. "We've always been much better at rubbing everyone's face in the mud and just doing our own thing. This is a very dangerous band on a number of levels—and we may be the first dangerous band that's come along in a long time. Rock music has become so predictable. It's almost a paint-by-the-numbers sound these days. We hate that. Our goal is to go out there and cause as much chaos as possible."



SLASH
HIT PARADER

Kittie: "We're not 'girls' any more."

KITTIE



AGAINST THE GRAIN

BY LEE TILLINGHAST

It wasn't very long ago that Kittie were the darlings of the entire hard rock world. They were young, they were cute, they were Canadian, and they rocked with all the ferocity of a rusty buzzsaw. Their 1998 debut album, *Spit*, was released when most of the band's members were in their mid-teens, and their initial tours drew reams of attention due to both the under-age novelty of these Lolita-ish Queens of Noise and the fact that these chicks could really kick serious butt! But over the ensuing years things turned in a somewhat southerly direction for Kittie. While the band's foundation — vocalist/guitarist

Morgan Lander and her drum-bashing sister Mercedes — stayed loyal to the Kittie cause, chaos seemed to rain

down around them. The rest of their group split (or was canned, depending on whom you tend to believe), their 2001 follow-up disc, *Oracle*, failed to light too many commercial fires, and they ran into problems with both their management firm and record label. It was clear that Kittie had reached a crossroads.

"Things needed to be changed," Morgan said. "We had started out when we were so

young and we had placed our total trust in other people. We didn't really know anything about the music business. All we wanted to do was get on stage and play. But we learned the hard way that you've got to take care of the other parts of your career. If you don't, even the best parts of doing this can become a real drag."

Despite all that they've gone through, it seems that in 2004 Kittie are clearly back on the right track. Now a power trio that includes bassist Jennifer Arroyo, as they hit the tour trail to support their latest disc, *Until the End*, the Lander sisters know that their novelty has worn thin; it's clearly time to put up or shut up for Kittie. But despite any lingering negativism that may hover around them, it seems that this power-packed unit has managed to find the silver lining to their rock and roll experience. Indeed, as they hark back to the near-month-long stint they spent in the recording studio—

located as it was in the lush rural environs of Longview Farm, MA—they realize that this still-evolving unit has learned a vital artistic corner.

"We were always so rushed before," Morgan said. "Some people hear that we spent just three weeks recording

this album they wonder why we worked so fast. But we *never* had that much time before. The benefit of working at a place like Longview Farm is that the studio is state-of-the-art, but there are really no distractions. The studio is located directly over the horse barn, and that keeps everything in perspective. The smells that waft up every now and then keep you from getting too full of yourself. It was the perfect environment for us. We were able to get everything done just the way we wanted. Now we feel ready to take on the world!"

Take on the world, indeed! It now appears as if any and all diversions that have come this unit's way over the last few years have done little to deter Kittie from regaining their rock and roll footing and gamely plowing ahead. Indeed, it seems like *nothing*

"We've had so many problems placed in our path."

is about to stop these extremely focused young ladies from grinding every ounce of musical satisfaction out of their stint at the top of the metal world. These days, with the appearance of **Until the End**, the Kittie girls seem intent on getting their career back in high gear. Even the title of their new disc gives an indication of the renewed focus these Kittie-cats now possess.

"That's the way we feel," Morgan said. "We're in this until the end. There's no turning back.

We're lifers. We've been doing this for as long as I can remember, and hopefully we'll be doing it for a long, long time to come."

It can't be particularly easy to grow up under the harsh glare of the spotlight, but that's exactly what Kittie have done. They've gone from the barely-post-pubescent nymphs who first introduced us to their music six years ago, to strong-willed young women who feel more confident than ever about the power and passion of their collective rock and roll voice. Clearly, no longer are these the three cute "girls" who first rocked and shocked the New Metal world with songs like *Do You Think I'm A Whore*. Today, these still-young rock goddesses have earned a new degree of respect from both their fans and their hard-rockin' compatriots.

"When we look back now, we realize how young we were when we wrote those early songs," Mercedes said. "We're still young now, but we've experienced so much more in life. We've toured the world, we've made albums,

and we've just experienced a lot of what life has to offer. It's all made us a much stronger band, and much stronger, and hopefully wiser people. I don't think I could have handled a lot of what we're doing a few years ago, but I'm certainly ready for it now. The energy that pours out of the three of us when we get going on a song is really amazing."

Still, despite all of the positive "vibrations" that currently surround the Kittie clan, there are those within

the hard rock community who insist that these girls have already missed their best shot at reaching the hard rock stratosphere. It did seem that following the surprising success of **Spit**, virtually everyone, everywhere was chomping at the bit to sink their teeth into **Oracle**. When that disc's rough-and-ready sound failed to ignite the same kind of frenzied fan response as its predecessor many sensed that Kittie's 15 minutes of fame were fast clicking to a premature end. But now with **Until the End** helping to restore a little luster to the group's slightly tarnished image, and the "buzz" about their upcoming tour beginning to build, it seems as if business has just picked up big-time for Kittie.



Morgan Lander:
"We've grown up
with this album."

"I think people might have been a little surprised by the direction the music took last time," Mercedes said. "The album was so heavy that it caught a lot of fans off-guard. But that's good, that's exactly what we wanted to do. I don't think any of us ever came to a clear-cut realization that we were going in a heavier direction—it just happened. And I can guarantee you that it will *continue* to happen. When it came time to make **Until The End**, we just went into the studio, and the music just came out. That's how ready we were."

PHOTO: FRANK FORCINO

HIT PARADER 55

Sully Erna offers an ear-to-ear grin when reminded of the stellar reviews that his band, Godsmack, has recently received for their new acoustic disc, **The Other Side**. The singer has reason to be happy about such a response since it comes at a critical juncture in the Boston-based band's career. Following as it does in the wake of last year's somewhat disappointing **Faceless**, the new disc has helped not only reverse Godsmack's diminishing commercial pattern, but has brought an entirely new audience to the group's door. For Erna and bandmates Tony Rombola (guitar), Robbie Merrill (bass) and Shannon Larkin (drums), finding an audience both old-and-new for their music comes as a welcome relief. Indeed, Godsmack hasn't been hotter since their triple-platinum-selling self-titled debut disc turned them into international superstars back in 1999. But Erna is the first to admit that releasing **The Other Side** at this point in his group's career was a risky move, a fact we recently discussed with the heavily-tattooed rocker.

"This album shows the kind of natural diversity our music has."

number of songs in mind. We knew we wanted a few familiar things on there that we could rework along with a few new things. In some ways, this album is more of a 'thank you' to our fans than anything else. It's there to help them bridge the gap between **Faceless** and our next album. Doing something like *Asleep*—which is obviously the opposite of *Awake*—was a lot of fun for us because it allowed us to focus on different elements of the song. Other things we tried like that—especially *Voodoo* and *Serenity*—just didn't work as well. We wanted for the subtle elements of certain songs to come to the fore. Sometimes it worked... sometimes it didn't.

HP: Why did you choose to include unreleased tracks like *Running Blind* and *Touche* in this format?

SE: Because they worked! We tried a lot

our hard-core fans another side of Godsmack.

HP: How do you think your hard rock followers would react to a show like that?

SE: Hopefully they'd come and enjoy it. But we'd make sure beforehand that they understood that there wouldn't be any mosh pits in front of the stage. A tour like that would be something very different for us—and for the fans as well. Maybe some people who wouldn't normally come to an arena show to check us out would come to a show like that. Who knows? The fans know that if we did do a few shows acoustically, that we'd get it out of our systems and get back to focusing on the heavy stuff by the time we went back into the recording studio.

HP: Speaking of the studio, when do you imagine Godsmack might get around to

GODSMACK

THE TENDER TOUCH

BY PETE MORGAN

Hit Parader: Have you been surprised by the degree of success that **The Other Side** has attained?

Sully Erna: Success is something I've never tried to figure out. I'm very happy that we've had some of it come our way, but I don't think I'll ever understand what makes it happen at a certain point in a band's career. It's great that a lot of people seem to be responding to what we've done on **The Other Side**, but we didn't really do this to sell a ton of records. It was done just because we like making music.

HP: But aren't all your albums done because you like making music?

SE: Sure they are, but there's a lot more pressure on you when you're all working in a recording studio making a full-length album. A project like **The Other Side** in some ways, is a lot more fun. To make an album like this, it was obviously very scaled down in terms of production. It was a very relaxed atmosphere, and I think that's reflected in the music. We've always enjoyed sitting around and jamming—just having fun with the music. It doesn't really matter to us whether that's done with one of our best-known songs or a song we really like.

HP: How did you come up with the balance between new and old songs that comprise the EP's seven tracks?

SE: We didn't set out with a specific

of songs, things like *Bad Religion* and *I Stand Alone*, that the fans would have been very familiar with. But when you take away some of the basic elements of what made the song work in the first place it just wasn't as strong. So we added a few new things that allowed us to play up the more subtle elements of our style. Those songs, along with *Voices*—which is the other new track—worked very well this way.

HP: Are you concerned that fans will now be expecting the band to present some sort of mid-set acoustic break when you're on stage?

SE: I don't think that would have worked that well when we were out with Metallica. (laughs.) We like having strong dynamics in the set, and we have no problem taking things down a step in terms of intensity for a song or two. But we didn't play any of the acoustic songs that appear on **The Other Side**, and I don't know if we ever will in the context of our regular shows. But there is a chance that we could go out and do a theater tour later this year when all we do is play acoustically. It would show

beginning work on your next album?

SE: That's something a little hard to think about at the moment. We've been on the road for most of the last 18 months and we just released **The Other Side**. I think we need to give our brains and bodies a bit of a break before we start gearing up again. But it will happen sooner rather than later. After a couple of weeks of sitting around, I know that I start to get really anxious. It's hard to know what to do with yourself. You can hang out with your friends and try to lead some sort of a normal life for a while, but your instincts start to take over. You want to start making more music. You want to get into the studio. Then you want to take it on the road again. That kind of lifestyle is hard, but it's also very intoxicating. It's almost impossible to get it out of your system for very long.

HP: Do you think that the success of **The Other Side** might have any impact on the way you approach your next studio disc?

SE: Not really. When we go back into the studio I'm pretty sure that it'll be business as usual for Godsmack.

"We've always enjoyed sitting around and jamming—just having fun with the music."



SULLY ERNA
HIT PARADER

AEROSMITH

BLUES DEMONS

BY RANDY SMITH

With the release of their long-awaited "blues" album *Honkin' On Bobo*, Aerosmith has once again proven that they're the master blasters of American rock and roll. For vocalist Steven Tyler, guitarist Joe Perry, bassist Tom Hamilton, guitarist Brad Whitford and drummer Joey Kramer, the release of their new disc comes at a fascinating time in this legendary unit's career. As these renowned Boston Bad Boys celebrate 30 years of playing the best hard rock on earth, they're also casting a knowing eye towards an ever-bright future. Recently we sat down with Perry to discuss the intricacies of Aerosmith as well as the details surrounding their exciting new disc.

Hit Parader: *Honkin' On Bobo* is a strange name for an album. What's it mean?

Joe Perry: It's a slang term used by old bluesmen that always made us laugh. It kind of ties in with the cover art and the album packaging. But if you use your imagination a little you can probably figure out what it means.

HP: How do you regard your personal performance on the album?

JP: I don't think there's a single thing I could have done any better for these songs. That will change when once we hear it on the radio—that's when you start hearing it as you would any other piece of music. Then you go, 'I could have played this and it would have worked better.' You have to remember that we lived with these tracks for five months before we mixed them, so we really had a chance to listen and think about the performances. At one point we had talked about rerecording the whole album, but it went full circle. When we started hearing some good mixes coming back we realized that the performances are pretty amazing, and the energy is there.

HP: How many songs did you record, and how did you choose which tracks went on the album?

JP: We started this album in the office with a boom box, listening to the originals, and talking about them. Some songs were more obvious than others, and we had a few favorites that we wanted to work on. With *Baby Please Don't Go*, Steven and I did a

demo with him playing bass and me playing guitar. We just jammed and realized that if the band grabs a hold of this one and takes it for a ride, it's going to be a monster. That was one way a song gets there. There were other songs, we played it and just took it on faith that the band could make something of them. There were times we thought, "Wow, if we finish these off they're going to be incredible." When we started listening to the rough mixes, we realized that we had more than enough to make a record. But we had to stop to do the Kiss tour, so we had to sit around with these tracks for almost six months. We went through the despair of thinking we had to cut everything again, to the elation of thinking, "Ah, we really nailed it. Let's get this thing mixed and out!"

HP: You and Brad did some tremendous guitar work together. Did you enjoy this recording process?

JP: Yes, and that was true of the whole process. Being in a 12-by-12 room hearing what each other was playing—and seeing each other, physically standing right next to each other playing—gave it a dynamic you couldn't get if it was a physically bigger room. I think all of that led to that feel of everybody playing off each other. Being able to stand next to Brad and Joey and Tom and all, you gave it that feel of intimacy that you just couldn't get any other way.

HP: What did each band member bring to this project?

JP: For the last couple of records everybody was just concerned with making their part work. Everybody had these frameworks of demos and filled in the blanks. On *Honkin' On Bobo*, it was a matter of getting the whole song to sound good, and everybody having to play their best and not screw up because the record is live. If somebody made a mistake or didn't play their solo as well as they were supposed to, it was going to bleed into somebody else's performance. So, you didn't want to be the one to go, "Well, we've got to do that take again. When the other four guys have done the best take they could have done." You always do a take counting on everybody else playing as well as they can, so... you've got to step up to the plate and do the same thing. There was pressure to play the best on every take—the kind of pressure you usually don't get when you're doing overdubs on a performance that's already there. So there was an intensity there that we just hadn't had in a long time. We've always made records in a way that in the back of your mind you're thinking, "Well, we can fix it. If this isn't the solo, I can always go back and replay

HP: So this album was quite different for you.

JP: Yeah, it was. Even when we did records with Bruce Fairbairn, we used to do basic tracks with the whole band playing, but we knew that we were going to go back in and redo our tracks and get them perfect. And Joey was the only one who the pressure was on to get through the song and play it really well. He was working at a disadvantage, because a lot of time he wouldn't be playing to a band that had all the parts. He had to use his imagination to get the best performance he could because he wasn't hearing everything the way it was going to be in its final state. With *Honkin' On Bobo*, everybody outplayed themselves on this record. Joey played stuff he never played before. He was able to hear Steven singing finalized vocals. Steven was able to hear me play guitar leads that were the final ones at the time we were recording. So all of this fed into making these songs have a vibe that we've never been able to get before.

HP: What were the highlights of the *Honkin' On Bobo* recording experience for you?

JP: A highlight for me would be having everybody down in the basement at once, playing. Also, there was a moment when everybody realized it was going to work. Everybody was pretty skeptical about the whole concept of doing a blues record, but we were all excited about recording with the whole band in the room together playing because we haven't done that in a long time. As far as it being a blues record, or a so-called studio record, we didn't know what form that was going to take. It was a leap of faith for everybody to get down in the room and start playing. But once we got a vibe and started to hear some tracks back, everybody realized that this was really going to be an amazing experience.

HP: Your singing on the album is the best you've ever done.

JP: I'm always singing on a track on an Aerosmith album. But this time out, I'm doing it on

Stop Messin'. Paul Caruso engineers in my studio, and we've done work together down there for fun, so he's heard a lot of my vocal things, and this is the first time I'm using my voice this way. We've been playing *Stop Messin'* live for probably 10 years. I brought that song to the band. It was one of my favorites. I learned it from Fleetwood Mac, and of course, Fleetwood Mac has been a big influence on the band, so it was a really good song for us to do. It seemed like a natural to go on the record. And when we play it, the band brings it to a level that makes it worthwhile having it on there. I'm

anxious to hear what people's reactions are to it.

HP: And you wrote an original song for this record?

JP: Steven and Marti (Fredriksen) and I had a song that we called *The Grind* left over from a previous writing jaunt. It's a very R&B-feeling kind of song, so it felt like it fit on the record. We recorded some other originals that are shells of songs, but given the amount of time we had, we knew we'd have to leave them for another time before we develop them. If we had a few more months, we could have brought along another new batch of songs and probably the majority would have been originals, but we didn't have time and that wasn't the focus of this record.

"There's not a single thing we could have done better on these songs."



PERRY & TYLER
HIT PARADER

BY: AMY SCIARRETTO

PRONG

In the early to mid 90s, Prong was a rising star in the metal scene. The band broke up, however, after releasing influential albums like **Cleansing** and **Rude Awakening**.

Band leader Tommy Victor, a New Yorker transplanted to Los Angeles, recently resurrected Prong and he's the only original member in the new incarnation. He recruited players that he feels are excellent and able to play Prong material, both new and old. The former band members had already moved on with their lives and had post-music careers, so Victor decided to go it alone.

He admits that he brought Prong back from the dead because of the band's name recognition. "I was writing songs under a different moniker, but no one was paying attention. The fans wanted a new Prong record, so I wrote a bunch of songs, and people were interested, and I always want to stay productive so I started up Prong again."

Prong broke up after **Rude Awakening**, an album which caused "people to scratch their heads, no one knew where to put it." Victor realized that after making three records for major label Epic that were different and innovative, "I had to rethink my strategy. Time caught up to Prong, and the style of stuff we were doing is what bands do now! We can still be productive and relevant." Victor worked on demos for three years, alongside Madonna's guitarist! You read correctly! Madonna's axeman! Oh, and Damageplan singer Patrick Lachmann also wrote songs with Victor.

Prong just released **Scorpio Rising**, an album Victor describes

as an "answer to **Rude Awakening**. I was swimming in despair, and went through a rejuvenation of myself, I have stepped up a level as a person, gathered some acceptance, have a more spiritual element. I was stripped of everything and inflicted it upon myself to rebuild, and that process is reflected in the album." Most great albums are products of great suffering, so there's no doubt that Victor rung every drop of blood, sweat and tears into this new effort.

Musically, Victor, in his thick New York accent, which proves the theory that you can take the boy out of New York but can't take New York out of the boy, says that Prong, on its new album, "is trying to reach new grounds. It's instinctual for me, to stretch the limits a little bit. I could have made a techno record, and but it fits into the guitar realm. My guitar techniques went through different experiments and have different tunings. The album has a different sound because of that. Basically, it's a new product, but it has the elements of Prong that fans love. It's a hybrid." The hybrid of guitar rock mixed with samples and staccato programming has become popular, and bands like Dope and Static-X are living proof. Both were undeniably influenced by Prong's past efforts.

Victor is aware of this fact, and proud. "We'd open for Static-X anytime," he says, although it's ironic that a band so influenced by Prong would have Prong open for it! "I'll do any gig I can. That's my philosophy. I've always been outside the mainstream music mind. We don't want this to be just nostalgic. As far as my personal taste, those bands are citing Prong as an influence, and that is awesome."

While it can be hard to slip back into old skin, when you're an older musician and have gone around and done this thing already,



Victor knows you can take it all in stride. "Sure, you can start to think things like that. But it was important for me to be involved with positive guys when making **Scorpio Rising**. You have to walk through your fears, and it's how you become productive. To walk around saying that things aren't scary is a lie. It's popular to do that. The ego takes over, you're in denial and you think you're in control. With **Rude Awakening**, I thought I was doing the right thing, but I got no results. I don't live for results anymore. I do what's in front of me and enjoy the process."

PREMONITIONS OF WAR

Premonitions Of War is much like today's extreme metalcore bands. It's got music hot enough to make your blood boil. It's filled with enough anger to fuel a large-scale war, and the Toledo, Ohio band's new album, **Left In Kowloon** is more brutal than a kick to the teeth by a pair of steel-toe Doc Marten boots.

But **Left In Kowloon** isn't just a rage 'n fury filled, mindless metal platter. Not in the least. Premonitions Of War, and **Left In Kowloon**, are thinking man's metal. The Kowloon in the title references a condensed Chinese society that was self-governed, away from Chinese and British rule. POW happened upon Kowloon after seeing pictures in a magazine.

"It was an area across the bay from Hong Kong. It's not there anymore," explains new singer Brad Wharton, who joined the band after its original singer bolted to concentrate on school after POW's last album. "They bulldozed it in 1993, because it was physically unsafe. It was just this unregulated, huge monstrosity. China didn't want to do anything with it; it was hard to keep in line because it was like an anarchistic society. People moved there because it was cheap. Some people were scared, and thought it was a dangerous place, but people lived there for 50 years and lead comfortable lives. It's a place I'm fascinated with and I researched it because I was so interested in it. It was a society that broke off onto its own, and that concept appealed to me. A lot of the lyrics I wrote have to do with wanting to be left alone, and exist on your own terms. And not be bothered. And the concept of Kowloon ties everything together. Our music is very condensed, like the city. There are so many things piled on top of each other."

Applause, applause to Premonitions Of War for injecting some thought and metaphorical meaning into its lyrics and its album. While many metal fans are just fine with banging their heads to the music's sheer groove and grind, many other metal fans can learn, thanks to **Left In Kowloon**. If you aren't into history lessons with

your metal, that's fine. But this is the type of thought and action that sets Premonitions Of War apart from its many peers.

Brad Wharton joined Premonitions after a nerve-wracking audition. He was a fan of the band, and would go to see it every time a show hit his local area in Michigan, and emailed the remaining members to schedule an audition. "When I talked to Mike about it, he told me to pick two songs and learn them, and then come down, and see if I could perform them. They were in a tight spot, because the original singer left two weeks before the tour. They were pressed for time. I was nervous, and didn't want to waste their time because they were in a pinch." Sure, it was a nail biting experience, but Brad handled it well. No, he didn't tell us that. But he got the job, didn't he?





LIFE OF AGONY

Brooklyn's Life Of Agony is another band that saw its heyday in the early '90s, bridging the gap between hardcore and metal before original singer Keith Caputo exited the band to do a little soul searching. Life Of Agony, or LOA as its legion of fans refer to it, officially called it a day in 1998. The band came in like a lion, but went out like a lamb. No real goodbye tour or show. Just lights out.

But something happened in late 2002. While the original line up continued on with music during much of the post-LOA years, things never quite clicked the same. Discussions lead to dinners that lead to talks of a spate of reunion shows which lead to a full-fledged reunion, much to the delight of fans. In winter 2004, the band embarked on a full US tour, on its own dime, something that's never easy for a band to do.

But guitarist Joey Z., who did time in the now defunct Stereomud while LOA was broken up, insists that the band's independence isn't a scary thing. "We are happy. We are in the best position we can be in," he reveals. "We are doing this business on our own. We are in a bus, and we have a crew. We are lucky people." Most musicians know that touring, while the best, most grass roots way to get the word out, is an expensive exercise. It costs money to get from venue to venue, to feed a crew, to pay a bus driver. Most bands receive tour support from their respective record labels, which has to be paid back through album sales, in order to survive on the road. But with LOA's history and fan base, the band is able to go it alone. "We are in a great position. We are writing songs and still have a dedicated following. Our fans never left. We can capitalize and build upon the base that we have, not have it dictated to us. We can write these songs on our time. There is no record label hounding us, asking for

this or that. It's so DIY and it's an ideal position."

Ideal position aside, Life Of Agony is happy to be back. In a surprise turn of events, fans turning up at the gigs aren't just fans from the band's past. New, young fans are showing up in droves. "No matter what we've done in the past, we stay true to our hearts and ourselves, and people saw that and that's attractive and they want something real always," the guitarist explains. "I know I do. The fans feel like we never let them down, so they share the music with younger brothers, sisters, and cousins. That's why we're surprised and grateful. So many kids come up to us and tell us that this is the first time they saw us, and that they've listening to us for five years. Back then, they were 13 or 14, probably too young to come to shows. Now they are 20 and 21, and can see us live."

The Life Of Agony situation couldn't be any more perfect, according to Joey Z. "We're playing better. We have a better vibe. We have more fun than we have ever had. It's our time. We're hungry."

So are the fans. The band is working on new material on the road while it tours, and will probably release a new album, its first collection of new material since 1997's **Soul Searching Sun**. In the meantime, there is a double live DVD and disc called **River Runs Again** available for those who want to relive the magic of the January 2004 reunion shows.

GORGOROTH

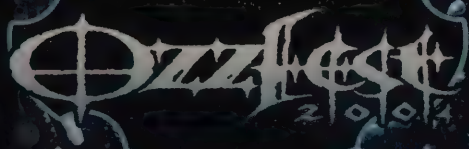
Controversy, thy name is Gorgoroth.

The black metal band has garnered enough publicity from onstage antics which have included tossing around goat heads, leaking animal plasma, and presenting crucified models. It makes you scratch

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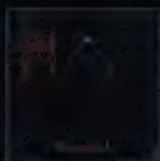
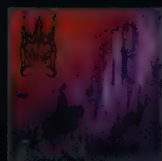
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your head and wonder what these European metal musicians and fans do when they're not performing or attending such crazy events.

All we have to say is that while we love a good rock and roll debauchery story, we're sure glad we weren't there. Because it must have stunk to high heaven.

We spoke with guitarist Infernus about all the hoopla surrounding the concert.

He thinks people are making much ado about nothing. "Yes, there is much fuss about nothing," he says in broken English. "It's important, because of basic principles like freedom of speech and freedom to believe what you like."

So, yes, the severed goat heads were real. The models were hired from a modeling agency and they worked cheap. The models actually passed out because of the warm temperature in the venue.

Infernus, and you know a guy has got to be tough when his name is "Infernus," but that's not even half of it, since the bassist goes by the name "King Ov Hell," also insists that the smell did not get to him and it was all for show. He also explains that the concert pro-

motors were aware of what Gorgoroth was planning to do as part of its stage theatrics, despite some denial in the press. "Yes, they were aware," he deadpans. "I don't know what they are saying now. The thing I know is what they say in the media. I can't say much more. I haven't been in touch with them much since."

Controversy follows Gorgoroth around like a black cloud. Vocalist Gaahl is currently awaiting trial in the band's native Norway. He is facing a seven-year jail term for committing a "vile act of violence." When asked about the situation, which could place Gorgoroth in a holding pattern, Infernus says, "We think he will have to go to jail. If you ask whether I think he deserves it, I will say that I don't think he did anything wrong. It's not a fair charge against him, and he won't get a fair chance in court."

It's all very cryptic. And Infernus maintains that the controversy surrounding the concert won't affect Gaahl's other court problems.

Well, it's apparent that seemingly nefarious bands like Cradle Of Filth and Dimmu Borgir look like schoolboys when compared to Gorgoroth. Visit www.gorgoroth.org for more info.

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Jason "Gong" Jones often shakes his head when he considers the strange—and at times distressing—series of events that landed him in the position of being the new vocalist in Drowning Pool. Following the tragic death of frontman Dave Williams in 2002, bassist Stevie Benton, drummer Mike Luce and guitarist C.J. Pierce weren't sure exactly where to turn—or even if there was going to be a future for their highly lauded band. After all, this Texas-based unit had scored big with their debut disc, *Sinner*, prior to Williams' tragic passing from a heart attack. Yet how many bands with such a minimal track record could possibly survive the loss of their most visible member? Many within the hard rock community assumed that Drowning Pool had slipped into the abyss, but with the hiring of Jones, and the release of the DP brigade's sophomore effort, *Desensitized*, it appears as if this power-packed quartet has survived their harrowing ordeal relatively unscathed. Recently we met up with Jones to learn what it's like to step into some mighty big rock and roll shoes.

DROWNING UP FROM THE DEPTHS POOL

BY RICHARD HEIMLICH

Hit Parader: Is it uncomfortable to be joining a band that just tragically lost their singer?

Jason "Gong" Jones: The thing is a lot of that feeling has worn off for me because I've been working with these guys for a year. I first hooked up with them in April, 2003, which was about nine months after Dave passed away. Since then the members of this band have done everything in their power to try and make it as easy as possible for me. I haven't felt any unexpected pressure, but none of us can deny what happened. It is a strange feeling to step into a band that's had success,

and then suffered such a tragedy. But I try not to dwell on it more than necessary. What Dave contributed to Drowning Pool will never be forgotten. But in some ways it's time for this band to move on and turn their attentions towards the future.

HP: The band enjoyed a lot of success with *Sinner*. Do you feel that *Desensitized* picks up where that one left off?

JGJ: It's a Drowning Pool album... yet it is very different. I bring

what I can to the mix, and that invariably changes things up a bit. A lot of the energy and musical focus is still there, but some ingredients have naturally changed. Time has passed and some new lessons have been learned. That always has some kind of impact on the music you make. The rest of the guys seem very pleased with the way things have turned out with this album, so I guess I should be pleased as well.

HP: From your perspective how is this album different from the band's initial effort?

JGJ: I think it's got an even more raw feel to it. We worked really hard during production to make sure that there was a real edge to a lot of the material. But at the same time, we also tried to stretch out and show off as much diversity as possible. We wanted to push ourselves as best we could, and it has been two long years since those guys did their first album. So much has changed for them. They've grown as people and that's reflected in the music on this album.

HP: Tell us a little about your background.

JGJ: I've always been involved with music, and I've been in various projects over the years. I worked for a while with Sonny Mayo from Snot—who's now a member of (Hed) pe—and I did some things with Dino from Fear Factory. I also auditioned for

Sepultura a number of years ago, but that didn't happen. I've always been pretty active in music, but this is the first time that I'm in a band that's in a full recording and touring cycle. It's very exciting for me.

HP: We know that you used to be a tattoo artist as well.

JGJ: Yeah, I did that for years. I was pretty good at it—I bet I've created more butterflies than Mother Nature. But it got a little old for me, so when this opportunity came along, I jumped at it. Tattooing is a great way to make a living because you get to meet a lot of very cool people and be very creative. But it was getting old for me. This is what I've always dreamed about doing.

HP: How comfortable do you feel singing established band hits like *Sinner* and *Bodies*?

JGJ: You know, I stayed away from even thinking about that for a long time. I know that sounds a little strange because we all know that eventually it was gonna be time to pick up the microphone and tackle those songs. We fooled around in rehearsal with a few of them, but while we were writing and recording *Desensitized* I didn't even want to think about that. Once the album was finished, and we started rehearsing for the road, it was a very natural progression. The band started to play 'em, and I was kind of dragged right along. I love those songs, and I feel relatively comfortable singing them, so I think they'll come across great on stage.

HP: I know that people like AC/DC's Brian Johnson—who replaced Bon Scott—always talks about feeling a ghost on stage when he sings certain things. Do you expect to experience that feeling?

JGJ: I don't know. I imagine that it's almost inevitable. Certainly when the band first goes on tour, a lot of curious fans are gonna be there. They'll all want to see and hear how the band reacts with me in it. They'll be putting me through the test. But I also know that they'll be incredibly supportive. I've already learned that about Drowning Pool fans. They're so happy to have the band back and a new album out.

HP: How do you plan to balance your set between songs from the first album and this one?

JGJ: I imagine it'll be kind of half-and-half. Of course you've got to play the better-known things—the songs the fans came to hear. But we're all very proud of the material on *Desensitized*. We hope those will all become audience favorites really soon.

"All things considered, this band has made an amazing return."



DROWNING POOL
HIT PARADER

Most people thought Machine Head was dead. After the lukewarm response to 2001's **Supercharger**, where the band shifted its sound, Machine Head went through the kind of ups and downs that lesser bands would not have survived. They parted ways with Roadrunner Records, their longtime label, were label-less for quite some time, and they began to question whether the ship had truly sailed for Machine Head. Then, somehow, the magic returned and the band created **Through the Ashes of Empire**, which fans are lauding as their best album since 1994's now-classic **Burn My Eyes**. We caught up with singer/guitarist Robert Flynn to get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about the inner-workings of Machine Head. He was candid and open, a trait we rarely find among today's crop of rock stars and wannabe rock stars.

Hit Parader: Most people thought Machine Head was gone, dead and buried. Then the band rebounded, and came back with an album that is on par with the first two albums. Since **Supercharger** was divergent from form, most of your diehard fans weren't impressed with it. How did you get from A to B, with B being where you are right now?

Robert Flynn: We put out a record two weeks after September 11, and justifiably, it got lost in the shuffle. We had a big comedy of errors. We had a video and single called **Crashing Around You**, with the video depicting fallen buildings. We went ahead and toured and had successful U.S. and abroad tours. [Former guitarist] Ahrie [Luster] had become uninterested in playing music as heavy as we were playing. He wanted to take the band in a more commercial direction. The rest of the band was opposite in its thinking and we wanted to go heavier. So there was head butting. He quit and we asked to be let loose from our contract, and Roadrunner obliged. We were label-less and didn't know what we were going to do. We sent out demos and got turned down by every label out there. We wanted to take the step up. It got to a place where we asked ourselves questions like "Why are we doing this?" and no one in the music industry cared if this band lived or died. At that point,

it was of phenomenal.

RF: No one knew what was going to happen. A lot of things were up in the air. We resigned for a licensing deal with Roadrunner Europe and we had a great relationship with them. Roadrunner US passed, initially. We

talked on our message board and tell us not to give up! Our fans became a huge inspiration in that sense. We were honest and open with our fans about the ups and downs of the band! We live our lives in public, and I got heat from my manager, telling me I can't say

"We've had a few problems in America, but I think those are behind us."

it became a selfish. We want to make music that's art for the sake of art. We're not going to be confined to 3-minute songs, and chorus coming in after 45 seconds. The songs got longer and more complex, and we were coming up with 8-minute songs. That was what we were happiest doing.

HP: Did you expect this huge reaction? It all snowballed from Europe, it seems. The press on this album has been nothing short

made a 7-minute long video for a song with thrash beats and 15 different parts in it. We didn't expect it to be so huge in the UK. It came out of nowhere. It was fulfilling to stick to our guns.

HP: There are things that happened that almost killed the band, but you open up and talk about it. You talk about being in limbo and not knowing what's next!

RF: Our fans would stop me on the streets or

that type of stuff to our fans. But we wear our hearts on our sleeves and that is how you earn people's trust.

HP: How did it feel to be on Roadrunner US again after being asked to get out of your contract?

RF: Several people had faith in the band and it never waned. There were people supportive of us. We started getting interest from other labels, and we talked to a bunch of different



New lineup, new album, same metallic fury!

MACHINE HEAD



BY AMY SCIARRETTO

people and I started conversing with Roadrunner again. They got back their confidence in us, with what was happening in Europe. Machine Head, even before that, was in a different headspace: We took some things for granted in the past. But we talked about it, and we felt comfortable talking to these people.

HP: Does it feel like a "reunion" to have your former Vio-Lence cohort Phil Demmel in Machine Head with you?

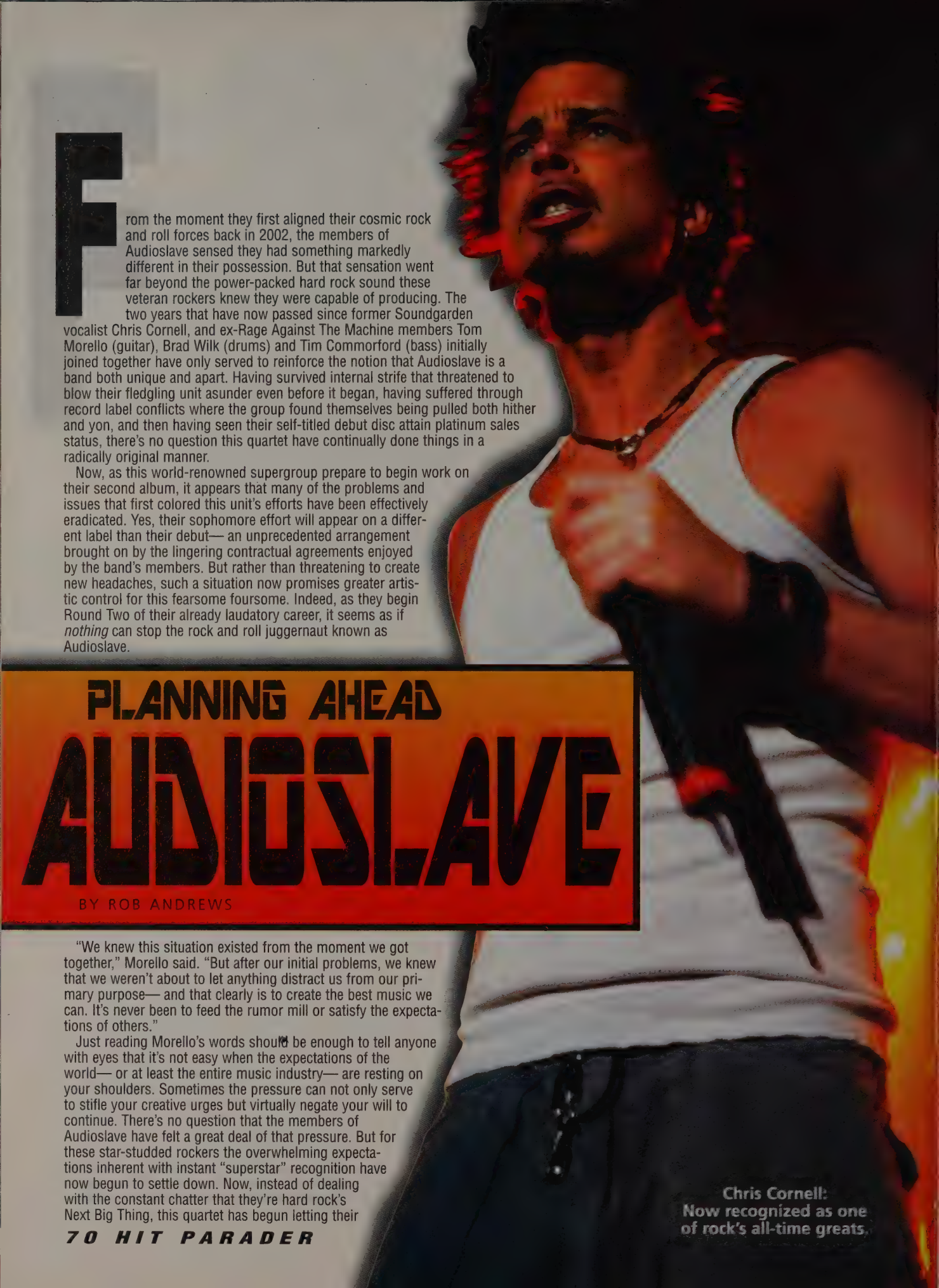
RF: After Ahrue quit, we had European dates already lined up. They were festivals, and we were headlining 25,000 capacity festivals for the first time in our career, so we could not bale. Phil had been doing bands since we were in Vio-Lence together. He had some problems with his family. He wanted to quit music, go to Europe with us, and end his career on a high note by playing with Machine Head in Europe. We went in with a

no-strings-attached attitude. By our first show, there was chemistry. It was always there, between him and I. When we ended the tour, he still wanted to quit the industry. But we left the door open. 9 months later, he came back and said, "This is where my heart's at" and we said, "Come on board." We had written half the record. He brought some riffs, and his coming in changed our whole mindset. Our styles complement each other. We started writing leads and harmony leads. It became fun and riff-oriented metal! [Drummer Dave] McLane was still writing and Dave and I co-wrote the whole record.

HP: Talk about some songs on the record that are you favorites...What inspires you, lyrically?

RF: Our whole mindset about the songs was to take the listener on a journey, with no simple, formulaic songs. We started getting into more complex structures, using fifteen differ-

ent parts. It's a lot to take in on the first listen. Lyrically, I write about reality and the darker side of life. Things like believing in yourself or taking from personal experiences. With me being adopted, I've experienced feelings of abandonment and dealing with it. Some songs are about people I know who have had abusive parents. It's not pretty, but it's what we choose to write about. Plenty of people write love songs about bunny rabbits and we're the antithesis. The theme of **Through The Ashes Of Empires** is death. From death, new life is born. At the core, from the title to the cover, which is an angel in a graveyard to *Descend The Shades Of Night* is about death. We were label-less. Ahrue left. We dealt with rejections. There was a part of Machine Head that died and the new Machine Head came out if. A reinvigorated, refreshed Machine Head and a new belief came out of it.



From the moment they first aligned their cosmic rock and roll forces back in 2002, the members of Audioslave sensed they had something markedly different in their possession. But that sensation went far beyond the power-packed hard rock sound these veteran rockers knew they were capable of producing. The two years that have now passed since former Soundgarden vocalist Chris Cornell, and ex-Rage Against The Machine members Tom Morello (guitar), Brad Wilk (drums) and Tim Commerford (bass) initially joined together have only served to reinforce the notion that Audioslave is a band both unique and apart. Having survived internal strife that threatened to blow their fledgling unit asunder even before it began, having suffered through record label conflicts where the group found themselves being pulled both hither and yon, and then having seen their self-titled debut disc attain platinum sales status, there's no question this quartet have continually done things in a radically original manner.

Now, as this world-renowned supergroup prepare to begin work on their second album, it appears that many of the problems and issues that first colored this unit's efforts have been effectively eradicated. Yes, their sophomore effort will appear on a different label than their debut—an unprecedented arrangement brought on by the lingering contractual agreements enjoyed by the band's members. But rather than threatening to create new headaches, such a situation now promises greater artistic control for this fearsome foursome. Indeed, as they begin Round Two of their already laudatory career, it seems as if *nothing* can stop the rock and roll juggernaut known as Audioslave.

PLANNING AHEAD

AUDIOSLAVE

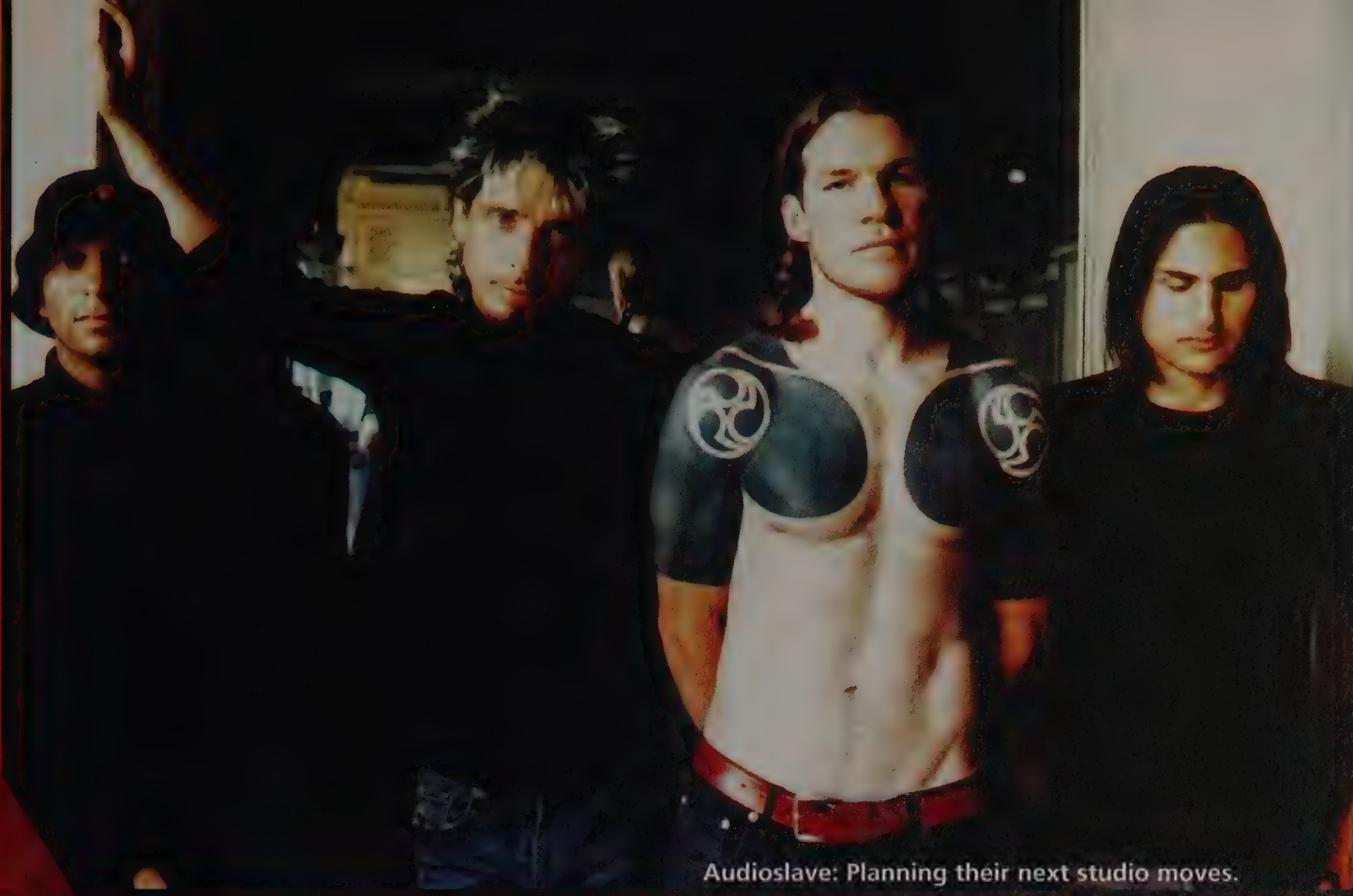
BY ROB ANDREWS

"We knew this situation existed from the moment we got together," Morello said. "But after our initial problems, we knew that we weren't about to let anything distract us from our primary purpose—and that clearly is to create the best music we can. It's never been to feed the rumor mill or satisfy the expectations of others."

Just reading Morello's words should be enough to tell anyone with eyes that it's not easy when the expectations of the world—or at least the entire music industry—are resting on your shoulders. Sometimes the pressure can not only serve to stifle your creative urges but virtually negate your will to continue. There's no question that the members of Audioslave have felt a great deal of that pressure. But for these star-studded rockers the overwhelming expectations inherent with instant "superstar" recognition have now begun to settle down. Now, instead of dealing with the constant chatter that they're hard rock's Next Big Thing, this quartet has begun letting their

70 HIT PARADER

Chris Cornell:
Now recognized as one
of rock's all-time greats.



Audioslave: Planning their next studio moves.

wall-shaking music do their talking for them.

"We never tried to build ourselves up," Morello said. "But it is nice that people seem to be excited about what we're doing. Thankfully, we've all been around long enough at this point so that we have some idea how to handle various situations— both good and bad."

It's easy to understand why the entire rock universe has been so excited about Audioslave ever since the first rumors of the group's existence began to pop up over two years ago. At that time, it had been six long years since Cornell had last recorded or toured with Soundgarden, perhaps the most dynamic and charismatic band produced by the early '90s Seattle "grunge" scene. And it had been more than three years since Rage Against the Machine had broken asunder, seemingly at the peak of their creative and commercial powers. When vocalist Zack de la Rocha left that politically-inspired hard rock unit, many within the music community openly wondered what the group's three remaining members would next do. When it was discovered that they had teamed up with Cornell, that announcement sent shock waves of surprise and anticipation throughout the contemporary music community.

Unfortunately for all involved, things didn't go quite as smoothly as they could have. Beginning life as "the band with no name," then becoming Civilian before buying out the Audioslave name from another group for the rumored sum of \$20,000, this quartet's musical ride quickly became as unpredictable as their name search. The band wrote and recorded nearly two dozen songs only weeks after getting together. Apparently the pent-up creative juices housed within each rocker practically burst forth when given the chance to do so. Almost immediately, renowned producer Rick Rubin (known for his work with AC/DC and Slipknot among countless other hard rocking stalwarts) was

called into Los Angeles' Cello Studios to help the band harness their creative juices. But things were soon to go somewhat awry.

It seems that after their frenzied round of writing and recording everyone began to take a second look at this "monster" they had created. Already Audioslave was being hailed as a "supergroup" in many rock circles... even before anyone had even heard the first note of this new group's music. All of this— along with a few apparent internal disagreements stemming primarily from too many managers and lawyers getting involved— quickly drove a wedge into the band, threatening to quickly destroy what promised to be one of the best bands of the new millennium.

Another key issue that threatened to cast the Audioslave ship onto the rocks of disaster was an instant "battle" that emerged between record labels— one that retained rights to Cornell due to their still-valid "personal services" contract with the members of Soundgarden, and the other that held a similar contractual clause with the members of Rage Against the Machine. At first this major label conflict seemed destined to bring things to a crashing halt, with neither party giving the proverbial inch. But thankfully, cooler heads soon prevailed and it was agreed that Audioslave's debut disc would emerge on the label retaining Cornell's services, with the band's second disc reverting to the other company. In light of the amazing success enjoyed by **Audioslave**— a disc that spawned a string of chart-topping hits including *Cochise* and *Show Me How to Live*— it's easy to understand why every label on earth would welcome this unit with open arms.

"They originally recorded 20 tracks with Rick Rubin," an inside source explained. "14 of those are on **Audioslave**. The rest, with a lot of new additions, are destined for the second album. That was always the plan. After the success of the first album, everyone can't wait to hear what they come up with next."

"It's a great feeling to know we've managed to establish ourselves so quickly."

OZZFEST 2004

A SPECIAL REPORT

What started out as a wild and crazy dream in the ever-active minds of Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne has now become a true rock and roll treasure. Nine years after it first came to life, there's no denying that *Ozzfest* has established itself as a vital cog in the American heavy metal machine. Indeed, for a generation of fans that have grown up under the pervasive influence of *Ozzfest*, a summer season without the tour's headbanging presence would be nothing short of unimaginable.

"The day *Ozzfest* comes to town is the best day of summer for hard-core fans of hard rock and heavy metal music," Sharon Osbourne said. "They know they're getting value beyond what they paid for. The music starts at 9:30 AM and doesn't stop until Black Sabbath leaves the stage at 11 PM. What they get is 20-plus bands, 13 and-a-half hours of non-stop music on two stages, and enough rock insanity to last them until the next year. And they get it all for about the same amount they'd pay to get into an amusement park. And seeing Ozzy on-stage is a better ride than any roller coaster that I know!"

There now can be no doubt that *Ozzfest* has taken on a life of its own. For nine consecutive summer seasons this mind-expanding heavy metal assault on the senses has continued to grow in every imaginable manner; each year it sells more tickets, breaks more bands and expands its realm of influence. And *Ozzfest* 2004 certainly seems to be no exception. Presenting a stellar lineup that includes a reunited Judas Priest (featuring returning vocalist Rob Halford), hallowed metal

masters Slayer and second stage headliners Slipknot, as well as the inimitable Ozzy himself performing once again with the legendary Black Sabbath, this year's lineup seems to be the perfect melding of old and new metal talent. Such fresh faces as Dimmu Borgir, Superjoint Ritual, Hatebreed and Lamb of God are joining their star-studded metallic brethren atop one of the *Ozzfest* stages.

"Being invited to be part of *Ozzfest* is always a big deal for a band," said Slipknot's vocalist Corey Taylor. "Not only do you get the chance to do your thing in front of thousands of people every night, but you get the chance to be part of a true community—a traveling group of musicians who are all determined to tour the nation and cause a little havoc wherever they appear."

Obviously the Osbournes have discovered the "secret formula" for presenting metal to the masses. Since coming to life in the summer of 1996, *Ozzfest* has played in front of millions of hard rock fans around the globe—who've forked over millions-upon-millions of dollars to attend the hallowed event. And by augmenting the musical aspects of the show (which obviously remain the primary reason that fans attend) with a variety of mind-expanding events, *Ozzfest* has risen to the status of being a true cultural phenomenon.

"Presenting a lot of different aspects of what might appeal to heavy metal fans was always Sharon's idea," Ozzy stated. "She's so brilliant when it comes to understanding how to take a basic concept and then expand upon it. I've never seen anyone be as creative as her when it comes to things like that."





BLACK SABBATH
HIT PARADE

★ Thanks to Sharon's tireless efforts—as well as Ozzy's on-going desire to do whatever is necessary to make each Fest as memorable as possible, fans far-and-wide know that they're in for some major ear-busting action whenever the event rolls into town. Indeed, *Ozzfest* has now become a true annual tradition, a rock and roll right-of-passage that a generation of heavy metal enthusiasts has grown to know, love and anticipate. It stands as the ultimate melding of "old school" metal philosophies and New Metal ideals, of established superstars and young upstarts, of those whose names stand as the very pillars of hard rock society and those metal merchants dead-set on making a name for themselves. It is where the high and mighty of the hard rock world gather together each summer to exchange music, inspiration and perspiration. Quite simply, nothing in heaven nor hell can come close to matching the sheer sonic impact of *Ozzfest*.

★ "We're so honored to be part of this year's event," said Judas Priest's Rob Halford. "When we signed on, we thought we'd be touring with Ozzy, but then to learn that it would be Sabbath, a band that shares our home town of Birmingham, England, made the event even more incredible for us."

★ Indeed, this year's event may well rank among the most hallowed in metal history. A reunited Judas Priest (celebrating their 30th Anniversary) will be vying with the returning specter of Black Sabbath (celebrating their 35th Anniversary) to win over the hearts of the head-banging faithful. The appearance of Sabbath has come of a bit of a surprise to many, since their addition to the Fest lineup wasn't even announced until late May. But with their **Black Box** collection introducing a new generation of fans to the heavy-handed wonders of Sabbath, guitarist Tony Iommi believes that this is the perfect time for his legendary unit to once again unfurl their metallic banner.

★ "I'm always ready to play Sabbath music," the axe master said. "But it did come as a pleasant surprise to be invited to partake this year... our 35th Anniversary. I never know if this will be the last time we're together or not, so I always do my best to enjoy it to the fullest

extent—and to make sure that the fans do as well."

Pleasing the fans has long been an *Ozzfest* tradition. Originally founded by Ozzy and Sharon as both a forum for further ensuring the Ozz' mystique as metal's most significant figure, and as a springboard for young bands looking to attain national recognition, the *Ozzfest* has now clearly become an American rock and roll institution. Taking place predominantly at outdoor arenas, the *Ozzfest* "vibe" will once again bring together divergent bands, fans and tastes into one all-encompassing metal maelstrom. While perhaps lacking the high-gloss media aura provided by some past *Ozzfest* events, this year's tour seems destined to go down in heavy metal history as a key moment in the form's ongoing evolutionary process—the time when "old" metal and "new" metal forged an even stronger relationship.

"This is a great year for the festival," said a Fest spokesperson. "Our lineup this year is really strong, especially when you have legendary bands like Sabbath and Priest aboard, and with metal making such a significant resurgence, we believe that interest in *Ozzfest 2004* will be at an all-time high."

As always, this summer's *Ozzfest* is designed to be a day-long (and beyond!), non-stop, high-voltage, multi-dimensional extravaganza presented on two separate stages with the express purpose of packing outdoor venues from coast to coast with the best in pure heavy metal excitement. Black Sabbath will climax the day's festivities with an intense ninety minute set—a fitting climax to a full day of metallic mayhem. Thus each and every *Ozzfest* performance is guaranteed to come to a fitting and dramatic close, with the most influential and revered figures in metal history bringing the already-drained crowd to their appreciative feet one-more-time.

This year, of course, there is a somewhat different twist surrounding Sabbath's show-closing show stint. Following, as it does, some eight months after Ozzy's near-fatal ATV accident (in which he suffered a broken collar bone, numerous broken ribs and reportedly stopped breathing immediately following the incident), many in attendance will be closely monitoring the actions of this legendary Prince of Darkness.

While it had been rumored for months that Ozzy's stage set would feature a variety of conveniently placed seats in which he could take a rest, those around the Ozz-man insist that he'll need no stage props in order to provide his fans with exactly what they crave—a non-stop metal fest featuring hits from throughout his Black Sabbath career.

"Ozzy will be ready to go," Sharon said. "His health is improving day-by-day, and he's working very hard in order to be in excellent shape by the time this year's *Ozzfest* commences."

But despite the attention grabbing exploits of Priest, Slipknot and Sabbath, perhaps it's what transpires in the hours *before* these legendary units appear on the tour's stages that has truly become of *Ozzfest*'s greatest claim to fame. In the process, such events have annually transformed the show from being merely just another summertime musical picnic into a highly anticipated annual celebration of all things metallic. With a variety of on-the-rise hard rock acts giving their all throughout the afternoon and early evening in their quest to become the Fest's break-out sensations, a friendly atmosphere of musical competition spurs each and every band to deliver a knock-out metallic punch.

"It's a great atmosphere because you get to hang out with a lot of great musicians and make some great music," said Slayer's Tom Araya. "There are no star trips, and no one looking for special treatment. It's an all-for-one and one-for-all attitude which really makes *Ozzfest* something special."

In true Osbourne family tradition, much of the credit for the newer bands appearing at this year's *Ozzfest* must be attributed to the ever-expanding role of Ozzy's son, Jack, who aside from starring in the family's on-going MTV series, *The Osbournes*, has now emerged as a true behind-the-scenes force on the metal scene. Sure, Ozzy himself still plays the starring role in the Fest. And despite her varied activities—which include her recently canceled talk show and her victorious battle with cancer—his ever-clever wife/manager Sharon remains the true "brains" behind the entire tour operation. But as *Ozzfest 2004* begins to raise havoc across the face of North America, it is the Osbourne's 18 year old son who has emerged as a true taste-maker and deal-breaker for the annual metal onslaught. Now apparently back at

"Every year I wonder, 'Can it get any better than this?' And it does! I think if we allowed it to, this thing could just keep rolling on forever."





SLAYER

full health after his much publicized rehab stint last year, it was Jack who realized that decidedly underground sensations like Bleeding Through, Every Time I Die and Unearth should also play an integral part in this year's proceedings. Indeed, *Ozzfest* has now become an Osbourne family affair.

"There's usually a committee of people who help make the decisions about which bands will be on the bill," young Mr. Osbourne explained. "The goal is to have some bands that are really popular on the main stage. That's the reason they are chosen. Then we also want to provide a forum for a lot of smaller bands on the second stage. That's also very important. We take everything that the record labels give us, follow what's happening in the magazines and the charts, and then make our decisions from there."

Year after year, *Ozzfest* has worked feverishly to fulfill Ozzy's oft-expressed dream of "giving heavy metal the kind of forum it needs to grow." Indeed, the Fest has given the ever-evolving metal form the kind of headline-grabbing media focus that no other musical forum has provided! Over the last few years such acts as System of a Down, Disturbed, Chevelle, Rob Zombie, the Deftones, P.O.D., Puya and Godsmack have all utilized the unique opportunity provided by the *Ozzfest* format to help launch their careers. And once again, as it has been in each of its annual incarnations, the Fest remains one of the most ambitious (and clever) musical events in rock and roll history. Each year *Ozzfest* has drawn more and more fans—as well as more and more media coverage—and the 2004 outing certainly promises to be no exception.

With its unparalleled success as the world's premier traveling heavy metal festival, the *Ozzfest* now enjoys the status of being one of the true landmark rock and roll achievements of the last decade. At a time when concert "downsizing" has been the craze, and at a time when many promoters have begun to openly fear that rock and roll had lost much of its drawing power, the *Ozzfest* has remained determined to prove both the timeless nature of hard rock, and the ever-loyal dedication of metal fans. From the very start, *Ozzfest* has boldly flown in the face of convention, defying those who had long-predicted the demise of the metal empire and the ruination of those who played—and listened to—the hard rock form. Almost as if to prove the foolhardy nature of such words, Osbourne and his musical disciples worked together to once again prove the power and appeal of the metal form.

"*Ozzfest* has come to represent something very special to me" Ozzy said. "When we first started it, I didn't know if it was going to be something that we'd be able to do on an annual basis because of all the work that's involved with putting it on. But thanks to the wonderful people involved—especially Sharon—it's become something very important in our lives. It's something I look forward to each year."

In all honesty, despite the incredible fan response the Fest has drawn year-after-year, despite the excitement even superstar attractions show about being included on the *Ozzfest* bill, and despite the generally positive vibe provided the show by the media, the on-going interest in *Ozzfest* has surprised even Ozzy and Sharon. They always sensed—even in metal's darkest hours in the mid-'90s—that there remained a strong demand for an international metal showcase, especially one that provided equal opportunity to struggling young acts and arena-packing tour headliners. But the on-going, and ever-escalating power of the Fest never ceases to astound even these seen-it-all, done-it-all rock and roll veterans.

"The kind of reaction we get is amazing," Ozzy said. "Every year I wonder, 'Can it get any better than this?' And it does! I think if we allowed it to, this thing could just keep rolling on forever."

Putting together *Ozzfest* in 2004 has once again required the undivided focus of not only Ozzy and his brilliant spouse, but also of a wide-ranging variety of music industry forces. It's no easy task planning such an endeavor; signing nearly two dozen acts to perform on a nightly basis, designing the two stages, making complex travel, food and housing arrangements involving 20 trucks, 40 buses and 525 crew members, as well as making sure that everything goes off like clockwork night-in and night-out. It truly has been a herculean task, but it's one that Ozzy, his wife and his kids now seems to relish.

"There's so much talent out there, so much great music," Ozzy said. "It's very rewarding for me to hear a lot of young bands who obviously have been influenced by the bands that have preceded them, but who also seem very determined to make their own sound—to do something different. That's what I find exciting. To me, this is my way of giving something back. It's not about money or about attention—I've got all of that I need. It's about giving younger bands a break. Hopefully, this will give some of those bands the kind of exposure they need."

LYRICALLY SPEAKING

the story behind the song

BY RENEE DAIGLE

WHAT'S "BROKEN?"

In one form or another, we can all relate to the word broken. Whether it's literally or figuratively, this word sparks its own fireworks of emotions. Since we are in the word business, this month's positive outcome came in the essence of a song.

With this in mind, **Lyrical Speaking** recently sat down with guitarist, vocalist, and lyricist for the band Seether, Shaun Morgan, to discuss his band's latest chart-topping single, *Broken* featuring Evanescence's Amy Lee as well as their next musical endeavor, and, of course, the story behind this inspirational tune.

"I wrote it two-and-a-half years ago for my daughter," discloses Shaun. "She was just born and I had to come to the States and I wrote the lyrics for her."

He adds, "It's about leaving somebody behind, you know, that is really painful to do, and then ultimately looking to the future and saying, 'Hopefully, we'll see each other again and everything will be fine.'" reveals Shaun.

"Yeah. We were supposed to do it with Amy two years ago, when we recorded the song's original version, which is on the album. You know, I don't know what happened why we didn't do it. But, when the **Punisher soundtrack** came up they were like, 'we love this song' we said, 'fine, but we want to do an alternative version with Amy on it.' She was game to do it. We finished it, and it took a life of its own."

Shaun, do you construct a song into lyrical form? "No, but on this album, I tried everything so far to rhyme everything but on the next album, we might not do that because rhyme is such an in conceptive form of songwriting. It's the nature thing, you know, being a kid growing up and singing the songs I grew up listening too, they all rhymed—it's the only up until recently when the songs started not rhyming and a lot of the rap stuff doesn't necessarily always rhyme. Yeah, this song in particular just writing and tries to focus on what the point of the song was and trying to rhyme and form the words."

Do you have any songwriting tips? "I don't have any," notes Sean. "Because we just won a BMI Award for *Fine Again*, and that song only took five minutes to write, but *Broken* might have been an hour's worth of sitting around and then messing around and the song came up, but a little bit of thought was put into the musical side of it. But, we won an award for *Fine Again*, our first single, and it literally took five minutes to finish lyrics and everything!"

He adds, "No, I don't have any advice. I don't know how I do it—I don't know how we do it! So, it's like for us it's just an experiment in whatever sounds cool and whatever makes you feel good about playing it and singing it—that's the key!"

So, how do you craft a song? "I do a lot of it by myself just because it's so personal to me. Other things we'll do as a band, you know, it's often cool to have some fresh ideas from someone else. If I have an idea that I can't finish and I need somebody else's input, I'll go in and face the band and pitch it to them, and see what they are thinking, and, if we come up with something cool, we keep it—otherwise, if nothing comes out of it we just keep the parts we like and save them until later and hopefully, we can use them in another song."

How would you describe your songwriting process? "I have an acoustic guitar pretty much in every room in the house. I carry a tape recorder with me, if I have flashes of inspiration—even if it's just two or three notes of it's extensions that's what I'll record, and then, when I finish a tape, and I'm bored and I'm sitting around with nothing to do, I'll listen back to how many hours of tape I have and then mark down which part of the tape I like how I could possibly use it for in a

song. And then try to construct cool, interesting melodies and things over the guitar parts that I have come up with you know."

Do you keep a lyrical notebook, Shaun? "Actually, I don't, because I find writing lyrics just before you record them give them a different kind of feel. There's something to be said for if your really comfortable with the lyrics they don't sound possibly as vulnerable as they would if you're still reading them and trying to memorize them, you know what I mean. A lot of the songs we record, I won't have lyrics until 10 minutes before I walk in, so I'll have to hold up the piece of paper with the lyrics to make sure I don't get it wrong."

What comes first: the title or the lyrics? "No. The title I don't have until later. I don't take this approach seriously—I should take this whole approach more seriously than I do! The things I take seriously are playing live and actually performing the songs. But, when your writing them, the lyrics have to mean something and the all come from a place, I don't want to dwell on them for too

SEETHER + AMY = **BROKEN** ON PUNISHER CD.



long, and then, you start second guessing yourself, so the whole thing— then, if I had a title then, I would have to restrict myself to whatever the title was. So, it's easier to name something after it's been complete, you know, it's like painting something. You paint something you don't know what it's going to be until your done, and then, when your done, you can name it. I feel the same way!"

So, Shaun, what's next for Seether? "We just finished pre-production on our next album, and then, we released the *Broken* version with Amy on the **Punisher soundtrack**, which sparked a whole lot of interest with everyone. We put our album on hold until the first quarter of next year."

He adds, "That's cool, but I think it's a little frustrating for us at the same time, because we're really excited about the new stuff and we really want to put it out. It's not that we are reinventing ourselves completely, but it definitely pushing us further away from the 'Nirvana' quote label, which people so easily stuck on us."

On a personal note: "Just be patient, we will have a new album out January or February of next year. Please check out **Seether.com**."

He continues, "And, we will start our own site: **seetherville.com** (a band-run site, so we can keep it up to date as possible!). A lot of the times, websites don't get managed as much as they should. Message board that I check everyday, but we're going to have a whole site that we will put up photos from last night will be up the today. We want to keep it up to up-to-date, if we do it ourselves."



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COMING YOUR WAY IN THE OCTOBER HIT PARADER

It's election season, and in keeping with the flow of the times, all of your "Reader's Survey" ballots have been tabulated ... and the winners are about to be announced in the October issue of **Hit Parader**. Yup, next month we give you cover-to-cover coverage of every great band that's rockin' your metal world. Black Sabbath, Slipknot, Judas Priest, Dimmu Borgir, Korn, Linkin Park, Metallica... they're all there— because YOU wanted them to be. You made each and every one of those bands win a category in our "Reader's Survey Awards" issue, and it'll be coming your way next month!

Hit Parader— better than a front row seat at the hottest how in town!

FROM THE HP VAULT

Each month we bring you an incredible feature direct from the voluminous **Hit Parader** vault—an article that appeared on these hallowed pages exactly ten years ago! Without changes, editing or updates, these stories provide an amazing glimpse into this thing we call rock and roll, dealing with the form's most famous—and in some cases, infamous—stars. So direct from our August, 1994 issue is this “vintage” interview with the inimitable PANTERA.

Despite two albums that have sold in excess of 1.5 million copies, Pantera remains one of hard rock's best kept little secrets. For vocalist Philip Anselmo, guitarist Diamond Darrell, drummer Vinnie Paul and bassist Rex, this situation is one calling for neither remorse nor concern. In fact, if truth be known, these Texas-based rockers kind'a get off on their “underground” status—especially as they watch their albums climb to the top of the charts. According to the always-intense Anselmo, it's like having the best of both worlds: being able to stay true to your music and your fans while attaining a comfortable degree of commercial accessibility. Now, with the band's third album, **Far Beyond Driven**, making its own path up the sales ladder, these masters of hell-driven, “vulgar” metal hope that their “secret” status continues to bring them more good luck.

“We don't mind being famous,” Anselmo said. “That's as long as our fans know who we are and what we're up to. It's never been our goal to be on magazine covers and become favorites of MTV. If that happens, that's great, but it's certainly never been a motivation for us. All we do is make the best, heaviest music we can and then hope for the best.”

Making the heaviest music they can has been the call to arms for Pantera since their debut album, **Cowboys From Hell**, was released in 1990. While in retrospect that record failed to pack the musical punch shown on 1992's platinum **Vulgar Display Of Power**, its immediate success signalled a major change in the musical tastes of the mainstream metal consumer. Where a band of Pantera's ilk would have had to settle for “indie” label status only a few years earlier, their bold, brash and totally belligerent sound seemed tailor made for the rough 'n rugged '90s. With the shaven-headed Anselmo, a former boxer, taking his natural aggression out on the concert stage, Pantera quickly assumed the role as metal's most prominent “crossover” act—a band capable of touring with anyone from Slayer to Skid Row and turning on the crowds of both.

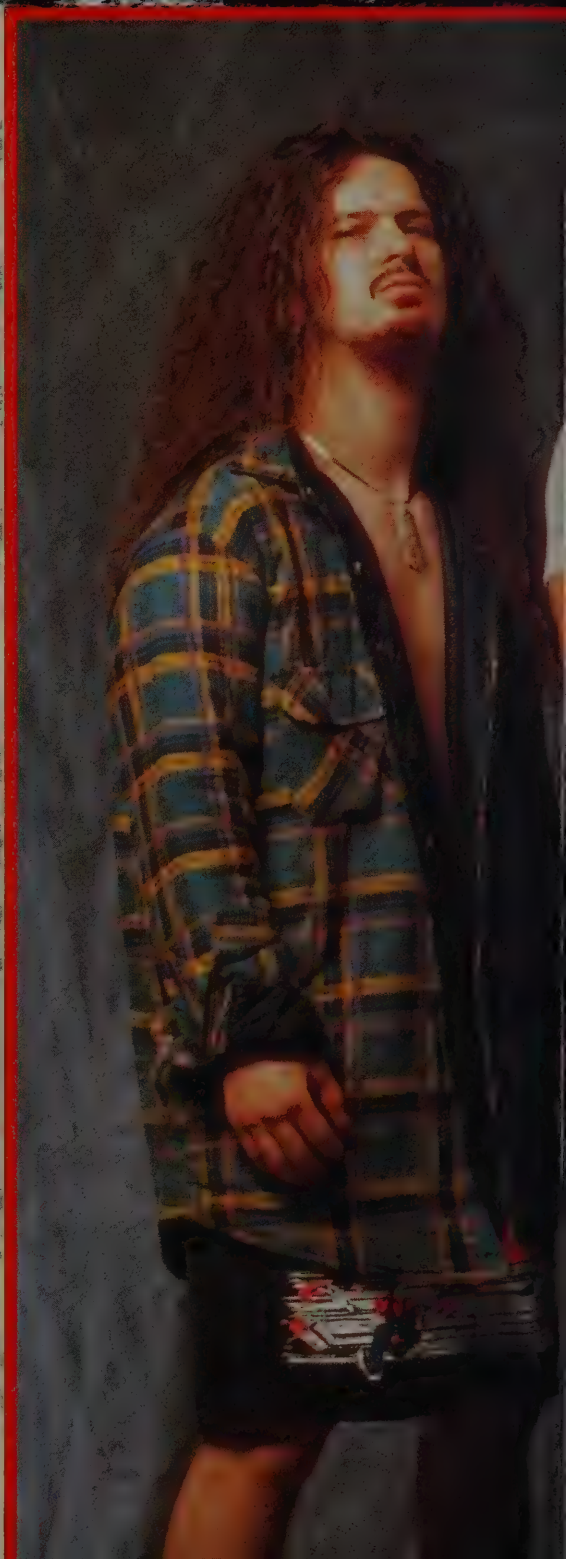
“I think we really are a great live band,” Pantera said. “When we toured with Skid Row last year it was really a great experience

because we were reaching a different kind of audience for us—yet each night we left the stage to a standing ovation. Those guys went nuts! We love challenges like that. It always brings out the best in us.”

Yet with **Vulgar Display's** success, Anselmo and his boys knew that the pressure would be on when they went back into the studio. With that in mind, the band took a little extra time writing the material for **Far Beyond Driven** before turning to producer Terry Date (of Soundgarden and Mother Love Bone fame) to add the final touch to their master plan. Even a cursory listen to their new material tells anyone with ears that their ideas certainly worked, for no matter how powerful and demented the material on **Vulgar Display Of Power** may have been, the songs on **Far Beyond** are far beyond anything the band has done before. Such new songs as *Five Minutes Alone* and *A Good Friend* and *Bottle Of Pills* not only rock harder and heavier than anything Pantera has yet recorded, they also display a degree of lyrical sophistication only hinted at on previous efforts.

“Yeah, maybe that's true,” Anselmo grudgingly admitted. “I really never thought that much about how the lyrics on this album contrasted to those on the first two. To me each song kind of stands alone and apart. But if you really want to think about it, maybe it's true. But I still stand by those earlier albums. This one is just where we are now.”

While most of **Far Beyond Driven** does represent Pantera's state-of-the-art musical statement, their gut-wrenching rendition of Black Sabbath's *Planet Caravan* tips the band's hat to one of their primary influences. Perhaps no band in rock is better prepared to handle a Sabbath tune than these Texas tor-



nadoes, for in their unbridled passion and barely controlled anger Pantera hauntingly mirrors the angst-filled sound of classic Sabbath. But why would Pantera choose to record a Sab tune at this point in their career? Are they trying to draw their own comparisons to those Brit rock legends? What are you nuts? Of course not! All they're doing is playing a great rock and roll song as only they (and perhaps the Sabs themselves) can.

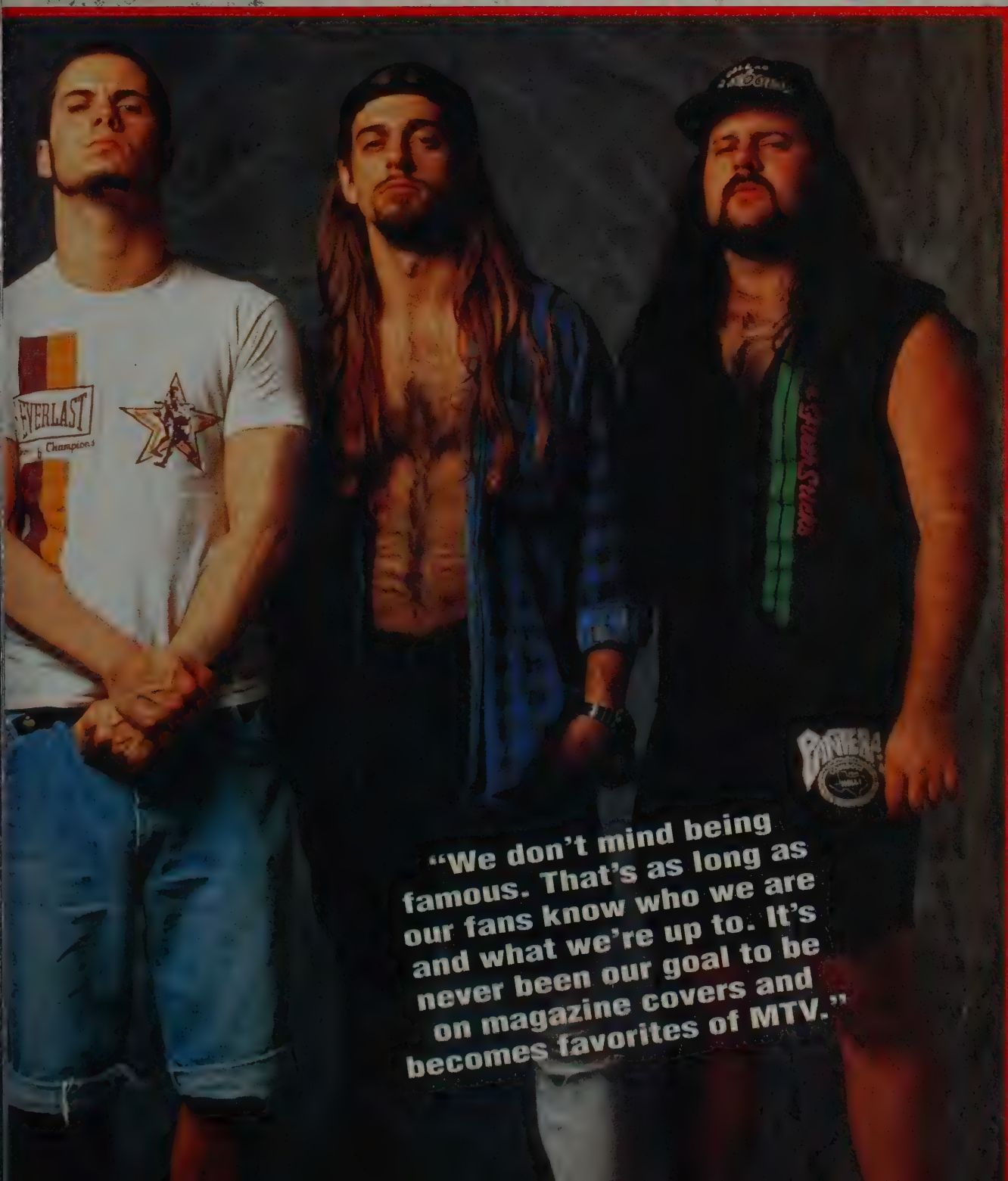
"Sabbath was a great band," Anselmo said. "They were a big influence on me and on everyone else in this band. We just felt like doing that song, and I think we did it pretty

well. We're not trying to have anyone compare us to them or anyone else. We're very proud of what we've accomplished, and to even have this band mentioned in the same breath as Black Sabbath is amazing. Maybe someday in the distant future some young band will cover one of our tunes. That would be really interesting."

Sabbath comparisons aside, there's no doubt that Anselmo and his bandmates are beginning to feel a bit of pressure knowing that the eyes of the rock world will be focused on them in the months ahead. So no longer will these guys be able to hide under their sup-

posed veil of secrecy and get away with being metal's most successful "underground" band. Things are certainly above ground these days for Pantera, and with the success of **Far Beyond Driven**, it appears a new world of opportunity is about to spring wide open.

"We can deal with it," Anselmo said with a grin. "If things go well, we'll just have to keep adjusting—but it doesn't mean we'll compromise one bit. I never understand the band that start changing things around after an album or two. Either you believe in you music or you don't. With Pantera we believe in it *totally*."



"We don't mind being famous. That's as long as our fans know who we are and what we're up to. It's never been our goal to be on magazine covers and become favorites of MTV."

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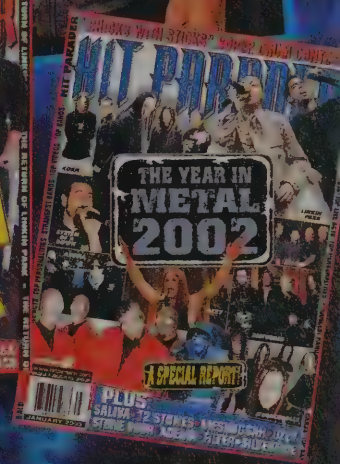
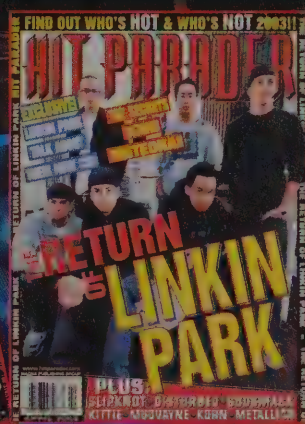


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REVIEWS OF THE NEWEST CDs

BLACK SABBATH, BLACK BOX

As they forge ahead celebrating their 35th Anniversary, some inventive folks believe it is time to focus in on the most famous period in Black Sabbath history. Their massive 9-CD collection, **Black Box**, features every disc this legendary heavy metal war horse recorded during their original stint with vocalist Ozzy Osbourne between the years of 1970 and 1978. Surprisingly, the material featured here is presented just as we all remember it—no digital enhancement or space-age studio tricks involved. And while a few of these tracks could have used a little sprucing up, the vast majority of the set holds up remarkably well. Sure, there were high points and low points with Ozzy, but Sabbath's music has proven it withstands the test of time.

GRADE: A



MOTORHEAD, INFERNO

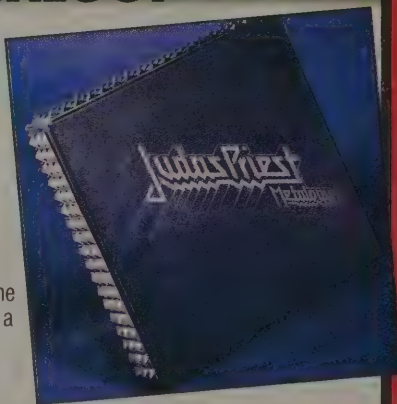
Much like fellow hard rock legends, AC/DC, when you pick up a Motorhead album, you know *exactly* what you're gonna get. That's not intended as a put-down of Lemmy and his boy, rather it's an indication of the degree of consistency this seminal British band has achieved over the last three-plus decades. Their latest effort, **Inferno**, is no exception, with memorable guitar riffs and pulsating rhythms setting the stage for Lemmy's sandpaper-on-jagged-glass vocals. We've always contended that Lemmy's ability as a songwriter has too often been overshadowed by his blood-and-guts approach to the rock and roll craft. Once again that is true here, with some true chestnuts being pummeled to the point of incoherence by Motorhead's unrelenting attack.

GRADE: B

JUDAS PRIEST, METALOGY

Throughout their 30 year history, Judas Priest (much like their Birmingham, England, brethren, Black Sabbath), have created many of the fundamental elements upon which the metal empire has been constructed. Virtually all of those critical building blocks can be found contained on the band's first comprehensive box set, **Metalogy**. Whether you love the band's heaviest side (*Victim Of Changes*), their cover-band skills (Joan Baez' *Diamonds And Rust*) or their more commercial side (*Living After Midnight*), everything great, and near-great, about the Priest Beast are here on full display. Whether you're a life-long fan, or just getting into the band following their historic Ozzfest "reunion" run, this is a set you don't want to miss!

GRADE: A



Judas Priest: Back with a vengeance!



MACHINE HEAD, THROUGH THE ASHES OF EMPIRE

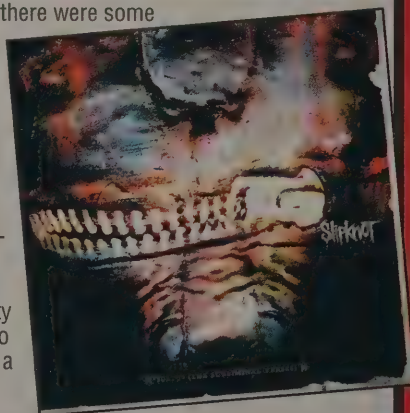
Machine Head's Robert Flynn has long ranked as one of the most intriguing figures in the heavy metal empire. Equally at home in a variety of musical formats, this enigmatic force has always seemed most at home in a stripped-down straight ahead hard rock format. That's exactly what he and his revamped unit deliver on their latest opus, **Through The Ashes of Empire**. With new guitarist Phil Demmel adding just the right degree of sonic punch, this could prove to be the break-out State-side disc that this band has long desired. But it always seems that the often mysterious forces that control the contemporary music kingdom conspire against Flynn and his troops. Lets all hope that doesn't happen again this time.

GRADE: B

SLIPKNOT, VOL. 3 (THE SUBLIMINAL VERSES)

Even after the success of their first two albums, there were some misguided souls who continued to view Slipknot as a one-trick metallic "pony." They saw the masks, they heard the rumble, and they believed that they knew all that there was to know about this Des Moines-based unit. Well, with the immediate and overwhelming success of **Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)** all that has changed. Sure, the masks, coveralls and attitude are still all there, but under the guidance of master producer Rick Rubin, a new, more expansive and more expressive side to the Knot has now emerged. Don't worry, the intensity and insanity that has taken this nine-man band to the top is still all there, but now it's presented in a somewhat more palatable format.

GRADE: A-



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rating system: *****awesome *****slamin' *****smokin' **lame *trash

A PERFECT MURDER, UNBROKEN

(Victory Records—victoryrecords.com)

Our brothers to the North in Canada hold a somewhat spotty history when it comes to delivering the rock and roll goods. Except for countless Rush albums, little of true hard rock note has emerged from the Great White North. But with the emergence of A Perfect Murder, perhaps some of that is about to change. No, this unit isn't about to change the face of contemporary music, nor are they trying to. But as shown throughout their new album, **Unbroken**, this Montreal-based hardcore unit seems determined to push the envelope at every turn, and test their listeners every chance they get. For the most part, A Perfect Murder manage to push just the right buttons, creating some truly memorable hardcore moments along the way.

RATING: ***

UNEARTH, THE ONCOMING STORM

(Metal Blade Records—metalblade.com)

Over the last few years, Unearth have emerged as one of the premier bands in metal's "new breed." Their eye-popping performances at *Ozzfest 2004* only served to further enhance this Boston-based band's



status as a leading light of their generation's heavy attack. Now, with the appearance of their eagerly-awaited new disc, **The Oncoming Storm**, this power-packed quartet has added another glowing chapter to their already stellar history book. Filled with instantly memorable riffs, thought-provoking lyrics and dynamic breaks, this is the disc that Unearth's many followers have long been waiting for.

RATING: ****

HEAVEN SHALL BURN, ANTIGONE

(Century Media—centurymedia.com)

There's only one word that properly conveys the musical attack of Heaven Shall Burn, and that word is "savage." The unrelenting, unforgiving and totally uncompromising approach utilized by this German metal-core quintet throughout their latest disc, **Antigone**, will leave converts ecstatic and the uninitiated gasping in shock. With the band's dual-guitar lineup leading the way, this unit lays down scorching riff after scorching riff... to the point where their music occasionally becomes an almost faceless melange of wall-shaking power. This is stuff designed to raise the dead... without stopping for a few casualties along the way.

RATING: ***

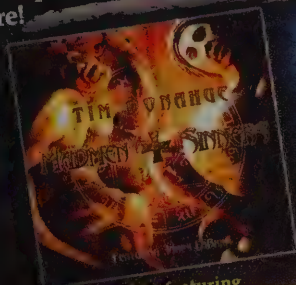


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MAGICK
RECORDS

HOLLYWOOD ROSE

the roots of guns n' roses



HOLLYWOOD ROSE

A historical and monumental musical document of the very first recordings by Axl Rose and Izzy Stradlin, before they became one of the biggest rock bands in American history. Guns N' Roses! Features 5 demo recordings that haven't been heard in decades, plus new remixes by former GN'R member Gilby Clarke and contributions from original gunner, Tracii Guns!

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A.18, DEAR FURIOUS

(Victory Records—victoryrecords.com)

A.18 have been plying their hardcore craft for the last six years—a lifetime for most groups of their ilk. During that time this So Cal unit has released two CDs, three EPs and a variety of MTV-ready videos. All of that has won them a well-earned rep as one of the most hard-working bands around. The myriad reasons for the high degree of respect shown A.18 are in ample evidence throughout **Dear Furious**, an aptly named collection of tunes in which this five-man attack squad pour out their passion, anger and aggression into a string of songs that take hardcore to its next evolutionary level. Less dark than some of the band's previous work, on **Dear Furious**, this unit actually allows a few rays of hope to seep into their often down-trodden psyche.

RATING: ***

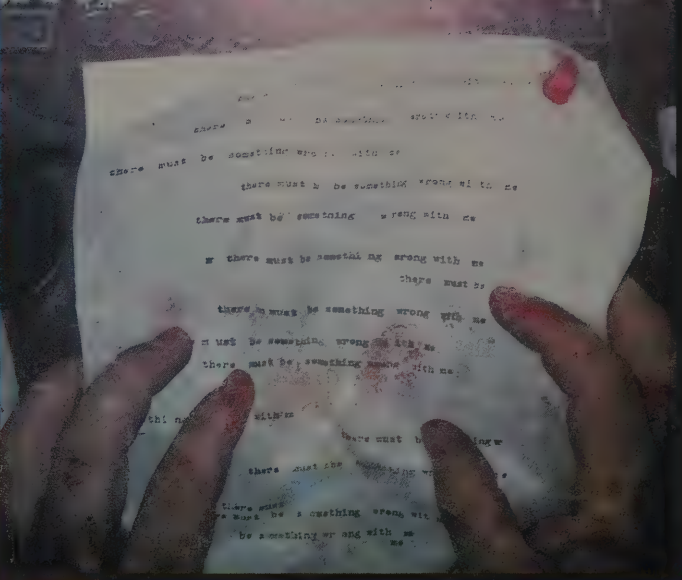
PETER DISTEFANO, GRATITUDE

(Sanctuary Records—sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com)

Peter DiStefano may best be known to the rock and roll masses as the talented guitarist for alt-rock pioneers Porno for Pyros. But over the years, as his well-documented off-stage predilections (including addiction to heroin) slowed his musical growth, there were many within the rock world who wondered if DiStefano would even survive—let alone record again. But with the appearance of his solo disc, **Gratitude**, DiStefano has proudly proclaimed that not only has he kicked his various additions, but that he's ready to rejoin the rock community in a big way. With songs that range from metallic rage to blissful intervention, **Gratitude** is a disc that has more to it than the faster-than-light stuff that always appeals to the six-string set.

RATING: ***

A18 DEAR FURIOUS



HE IS LEGEND. 91025

(Tribune Records—tribune/records.com)

He Is Legend is one of those bands you encounter every now and then that stands as a bold testament to the old adage, "you never know what to expect." Housed within the songs featured on this unit's latest collection, **91025**, are snippets of metal, emo, hardcore, and even a touch of good ol' Southern-styled rock. When these varying—and seemingly conflicting—influences blend together, as they do many times throughout this disc, then He Is Legend stands as a triumphant success. But when they don't—which is a tad too often—this stuff comes across as a somewhat jumbled, jangled, strangled mess.

RATING: **

HE IS LEGEND



DARK TRANQUILLITY, EXPOSURES—IN RETROSPECT AND DENIAL

(Century Media—centurymedia.com)

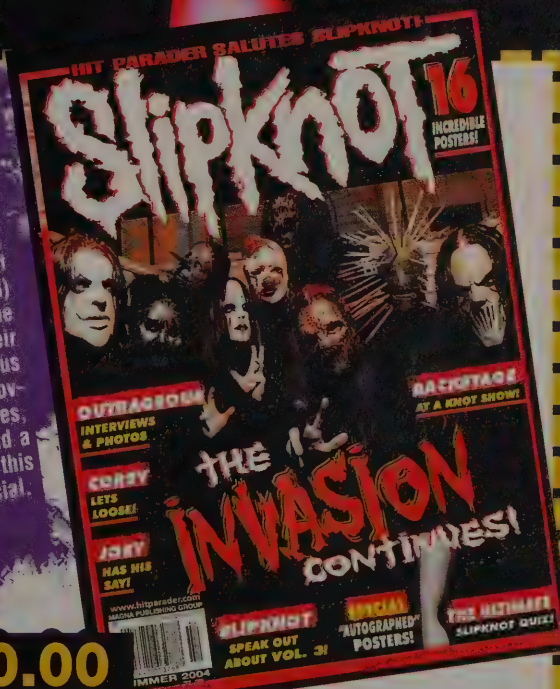
Dark Tranquillity have been shaking up the metal underground for the last fifteen years. In commemoration of that lengthy period of success, on their latest release, **Exposures—In Retrospect and Denial**, the band has chosen to delve deep into their extensive archives to uncover hidden treasures, unreleased tracks and other musical treats destined to delight their frenzied following. While it seems unlikely that this set will win over many new converts to Dark Tranquillity's intense, prog-metal approach, there's no denying that it will probably be received like manna from heaven by the band's ever-loyal fan base. In addition, there is a second disc featuring over an hour's worth of live tracks—as well as a 20-page booklet presenting highlights of this influential band's career.

RATING: ****

HIT PARADER PRESENTS
THE ULTIMATE
SLIPKNOT
POSTER MAGAZINE!!
16 INCREDIBLE POSTERS
PLUS OUTRAGEOUS
INTERVIEWS!

Things are hotter than ever in the world of Slipknot. Indeed, in many ways this is the start of a new day, a new era and possibly a new revolution for the one and only Knot. For d.J. Sid Wilson, bassist Paul Gray, guitarist James Root, drummer Joey Jordison, keyboardist Craig Jones, percussionist Chris Fehn, percussionist Shawn "Clown" Crahan, guitarist Mick Thompson and vocalist Corey Taylor (also known to their ever-loyal followers as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) it's time to focus all of their collective energies into once again becoming the most infamous heavy metal band on Earth. Now with the appearance of their new album, Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses), and the start of their various world-wide tours, you'd have to be both blind and deaf not to note that this cover-all-wearing, mask-bearing, hard rocking unit from the wilds of Des Moines, Iowa, has returned to the scene just in time to give the entire metal world a much needed kick in the pants. With all that in mind, Hit Parader offers this salute to the one and only Slipknot in the form of our incredible poster special. This is one you don't want to miss!

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TOYS IN THE ATTIC

THE COOLEST GAMES & GEAR

BY RENEE DAIGLE

HORROR-FULL

At press time, the essence of the true Hollywood horror film inspired the **Hit Parader** editors to check out everything related from action figures to video games. This month is sure to be a treat for the true horror connoisseur!

MCFARLANE'S MONSTERS!

The third series of the **McFarlane's Monsters** action figures are inspired by a thing of the past—a historical look back at some of the human race's most notorious blood-letters and miscreants.

The **Six Faces of Madness** are incredibly detailed and fully accessorized, **McFarlane's Monsters 3** gives new meaning to the term "monster."

The line-up includes:

Billy The Kid: He's one of the most noted gunfighters of the American Wild West, Billy the Kid is described as both a cold-blooded murderer and a modern-day Robin Hood.

Rasputin: He was a debauched, illiterate Siberian peasant who turned his sinful life into that of a quasi-religious faith healer and fortune-teller in 19th Century Russia.

Elizabeth Bathory: The Blood Queen of Hungary, who struck terror throughout the late 1500s and early 1600s. It has been rumored that she killed more than 600 young women. Bathory tortured servants throughout her life. When her beauty began to fade, she began bathing in the blood of slaughtered young girls as a fountain of youth form.

Attila The Hun: He was the infamous leader of the blood-thirsty Huns, who led devastating plundering raids into Western Europe.

Jack The Ripper: He was one of the world's most notorious serial killers and the subject of much speculation. To this day, Jack the Ripper's true identity remains unknown.

Vlad The Impaler: He was the true Prince of

Dracula! He was known as Vlad Dracula (translated as "Son of the Devil!")

For more information on the **Six Faces of Madness**, please visit www.McFarlane.com.

VAN HELSING

Picture it: It's the turn of the 19th Century when monsters lurk in the shadows, stalking their prey under the cover of

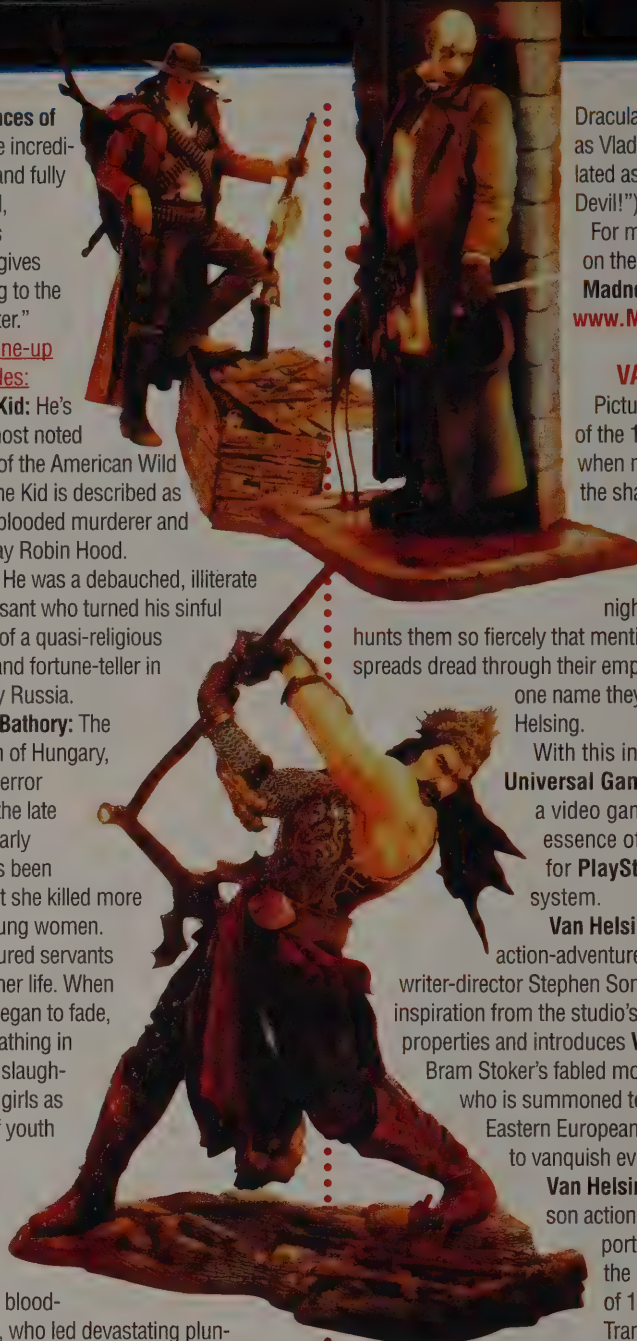
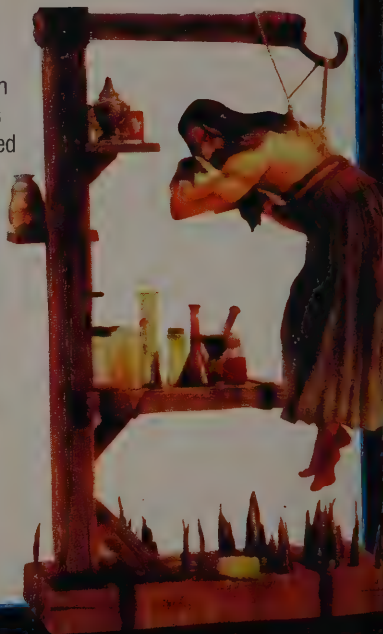
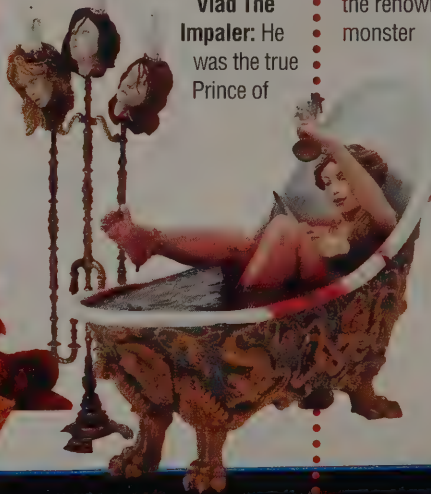
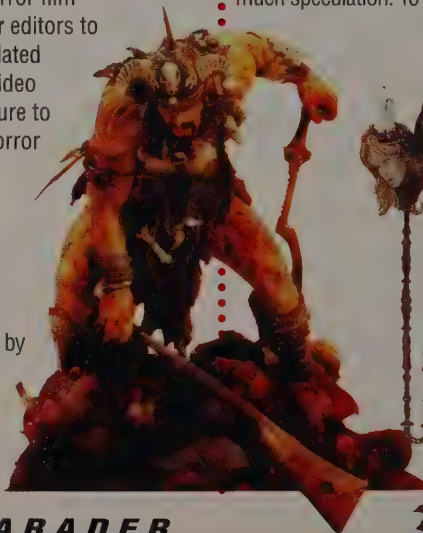
night. But one man hunts them so fiercely that mention of his name spreads dread through their empty hearts. The one name they all fear is Van Helsing.

With this in mind, **Vivendi Universal Games** has created a video game from the essence of **Van Helsing** for PlayStation 2 gaming system.

Van Helsing, the epic action-adventure film from writer-director Stephen Sommers draws inspiration from the studio's classic horror properties and introduces **Van Helsing**, Bram Stoker's fabled monster hunter, who is summoned to a distant Eastern European land on a quest to vanquish evil.

Van Helsing, the third-person action game, transports players back to the macabre world of 19th Century Transylvania—home to the legendary

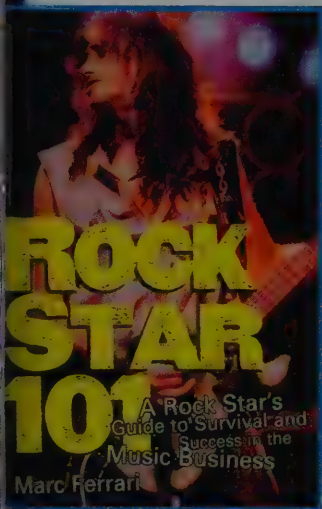
Dracula, Wolf Man, and the Frankenstein Monster. As the renowned monster





hunter Van Helsing, players must hunt down and destroy the evil that inhabits these ancient lands before darkness engulfs the world.

As players progress through Transylvania, the Castle Frankenstein and Castle Dracula, they will encounter a great deal of evil such as the legendary dark prince Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, the Wolf Man and Igor as well as a host of original creatures, who were created for the game including stone gargoyles, fell spirits and banshees.



book **Rock Star 101—A Rock Star's Guide to Survival and Success in the Music Business** (Allworth Press) written by former Keel guitarist, Marc Ferrari, is for you!

In **Rock Star 101**, Ferrari tells fellow musicians how to make sure their talent is financially rewarded and how to apply their creativity to new sources of income.

You will also learn about the professionals who help a band grow, when it is time to hire them, and how to pick a team that promises optimum efficiency.

As Ferrari reflects, "The key is to find the balance between art and commerce and to surround your self with a contingent of competent, trustworthy people!"

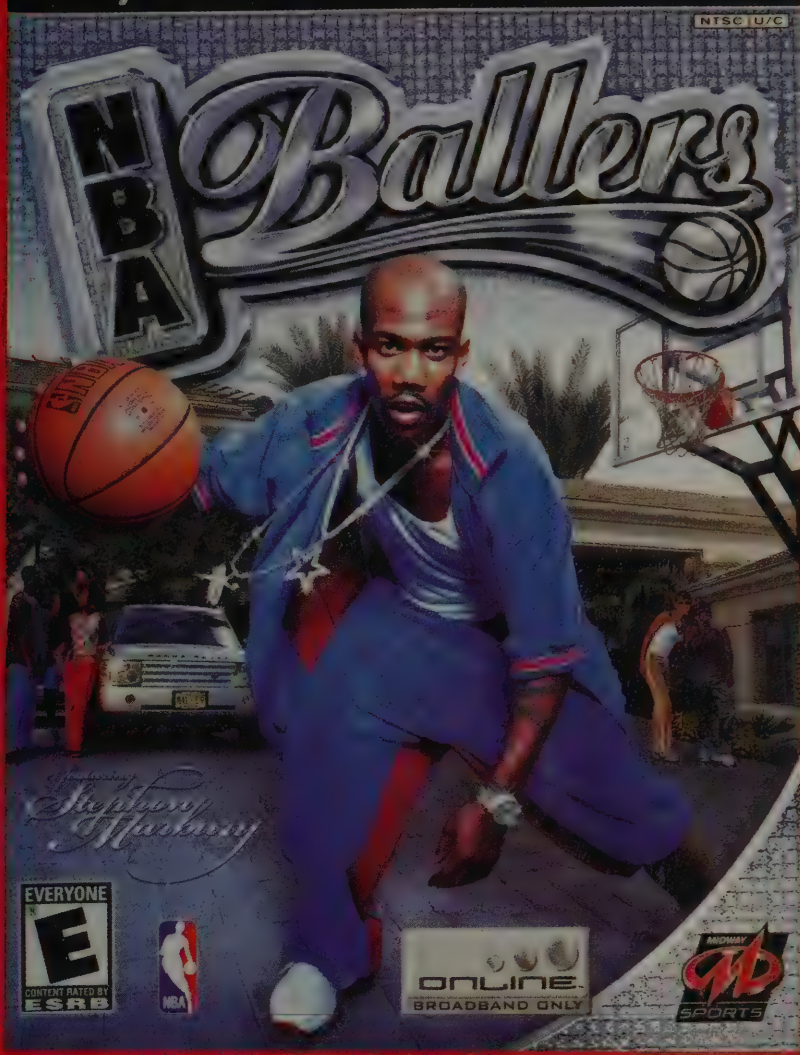
For more info click onto www.allworth.com.

ROCK STAR 101

Question: Have you ever dreamed about signing your name on the dotted line of your very own recording contract? Standing in front of a roaring crowd screaming your name?

Well, if you answered "yes" to these questions, than this

PlayStation 2



NBA BALLERS

NBA Ballers created by Midway Sports allows the gamer to live like a rock star—oops, an NBA superstar—through the eyes of your PlayStation 2 gaming system!

This exclusive one-on-one basketball video game highlights the "bling-bling" lifestyle of the NBA superstars from their chromed-out cars to their ice to their tattoos and jets. **NBA Ballers** features New York Knicks, number 3; Stephon Marbury has it all and more!

Key Features:

Experience the NBA Superstars up-close and as never seen before: Officially licensed by the NBA and NBA

Legends, **NBA Ballers** take the game outside the arenas and into some of the most lavish NBA player "cribs" for an up-close and personal one-on-one experience with more than 60 current and 24 all-time player legends.

Most intense one-on-one game play: This is the only basketball video game to deliver the pure excitement of basketball by highlighting the intensity of the one-on-one confrontation.

First-ever story mode in a licensed sports game: Live the fantasy life of an NBA superstar in "Rags to Riches" as you play your way to the top!

For more information about **NBA Ballers**, please visit

www.MidwaySports.net

TECH TALK WITH... THE DARKNESS

Any way you look at it, it's been quite a year for the Darkness. Everywhere you turn these days, it seems impossible to escape the power-packed music made by this highly controversial quartet. Yet whether you love the Darkness for their retro-rock energy or hate them for their a-bit-too-campy charisma, there's no denying the impact these English acts have had on the entire contemporary music scene. Quite simply, the Darkness have turned on the world with their power-riff guitar hooks and their Queen-styled falsetto vocals. Yet for all the attention that vocalist/guitarist Justin Hawkins, guitarist Dan Hawkins, bassist Frankie Poullain and drummer Ed Graham have generated with the music featured on their debut disc, *Permission to Land*, it is on the concert stage where their hard-charging style has garnered even more focus. With a sound that matches their throw-back look, it is apparent that the Darkness love vintage equipment as much as they love a vintage hard rock style. In fact, when you get right down to it, you really can't have one without the other. So, with that thought firmly implanted in our cerebral cortexes, let's take an in-depth look at the guitars, amps, drums and cymbals utilized so effectively by the British bashers known far and wide as the Darkness.

BY RYAN ABRAHAM

JUSTIN HAWKINS:

Justin's main guitar is a black version of his brother Dan's 1998 Les Paul Standard. That's the one he plays most of the time on stage and in the studio. His second guitar is a clear 1969 Dan Armstrong, which is nearly identical to ones used by Keith Richards and Joe Perry. Justin likes to tell anyone who'll listen that he picked up this guitar a few years back for practically nothing, since it's now worth almost \$2,000! Since it's old and rather fragile, he rarely uses the Armstrong on stage, though you hear it throughout *Permission to Land*.

Justin uses Ernie Ball Hybrid Slinky strings (9 on the top for solos and 42 on the low E to keep things heavy). Justin prefers Jim Dunlop 73mm nylon picks.

When it comes time to plug in, Justin likes a Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier Head run through a

Marshall 1960ax Greenback 4" x 12" for his rhythm sound. He uses the middle channel (rhythm) with the gain low and the master channel right up in order to push the mid levels. For Justin's solo sound he uses an A/B box at the front of the stage to kick in a Marshall JCM800 2" x 12" combo. Justin originally used a different channel on the Mesa head for lead solos but they never seemed to cut through the sound at a level that satisfied him.

With the JCM800, the pre-amp is set at just below 10 and driven by a Boss Turbo distortion which is run on "full". Justin also has a Korg DTR1 rack tuner at the front of the chain which can mute signal to the amp for tuning. Justin also uses a Shure wireless system to allow him to run around without being hindered by leads.

DAN HAWKINS:

Dan is the one responsible for acquiring and continually improving the band's collection of gear. Always on the look-out for classic guitars and amps, he is unquestionably the Darkness' "tech head."

Dan's principle "weapon" is a 1998 Les Paul Standard guitar with a honeyburst finish.

Dan originally used Ernie Ball Super Slinky strings. He then switched to

Top/Heavy Bottoms.

But even these heavier gauge strings weren't providing him with the kind of sonic "punch" he was looking for.

That's when he and his guitar tech cooked up a customized string set including 54, 44, 33, 22, 17, 11 gauge strings—some of the heaviest around.

When it comes time to plug in and amplify his six-string sound, Dan chooses to run two Marshall MkII 100 watt Super Lead Heads through two 1960ax Vintage greenback 4" x 12" cabinets. This gives him just the kind of wall-shaking power he seeks.

Marshall 1, the amp responsible for Dan's "clean" sound, is a rare limited edition version of the standard MkII head and is responsible for the bulk of The Darkness sound.

This amp is 100 watts of pure power, so it has to be run through a Marshall Power Brake to limit some of its sonic potential. Otherwise, some of those sitting close to the stage might find themselves being blown right through the back wall. Dan runs this

amp with a bare minimum of gain—with the treble gain on about 1.5 and bass gain on about 4. This allows him to maintain a "clean" rhythm sound.

When Dan wants to really crank things up and take everything to "11" he relies on his Marshall 2 Standard Super Lead, which is quite similar to the Marshall 1 although it is a larger amp and "growls" a lot more when used at mid-range settings.

Dan runs the Marshall 2 amp on extremely low volume—actually between 1 and 2 on both gain

Inputs—so that he doesn't require a power brake. In this set-up he uses a Mesa Boogie V-Twin as a pre-amp. The Mesa V-Twin is set to about quarter gain and half way up on the master volume with all tone controls on "full."

Dan also utilizes a Line6 Delay Modeller from which two leads are sent to his Marshall's so that they run in stereo. Prior to his signal reaching the Line6 he has a very rare vintage Ibanez Tube Screamer, a device generally reserved for his solos.

The rest of Dan's pedals are basically A/B boxes, one cutting the sound to the heavy amp channel, and one sending the entire signal to a Boss TU12 Tuner. Dan also has an array of vintage pedals/gadgets/effects that he likes to use in the studio.

FRANKIE POUILLAIN:

Frankie plays a classic, early '70s Gibson Thunderbird. The bass is strung with Elite Stadium Strings which need to be struck by the hardest lime green picks available. For

amplification, Frankie runs an Ampeg SVTII classic 400watt Amp head through a standard 8" x 10" Ampeg cabinet. He runs the gain on just under full. Frankie has a Korg DTR1 rack tuner at the front of the

chain which also mutes his signal to the amp for tuning. Frankie's on-stage set also features a rack mount Sans Amp Bass Driver

"We prefer vintage gear—it just sounds better."

ED GRAHAM:

Ed plays a Black Ludwig Power Kit - 24" Bass Drum / 13" Deep Power Tom / 14" Deep Power Tom / 16" Standard Floor Tom. FYI: This drum kit formerly belonged to Frankie Goes To Hollywood and can be seen on their first Top Of The Pops appearance! Ed's snare is a brass Mapex Phosphor Bronze Precious Metal 14" x 6" deep—one of the best snare drums around!! For cymbals, Ed uses a 20" 2002 Paiste ride, 16" and 19" Zildjian Avedis crash cymbals. His on-stage hardware is double braced with a Tama Iron Cobra bass-drum pedal providing the beats.



JUSTIN HAWKINS
HIT PARADER

INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

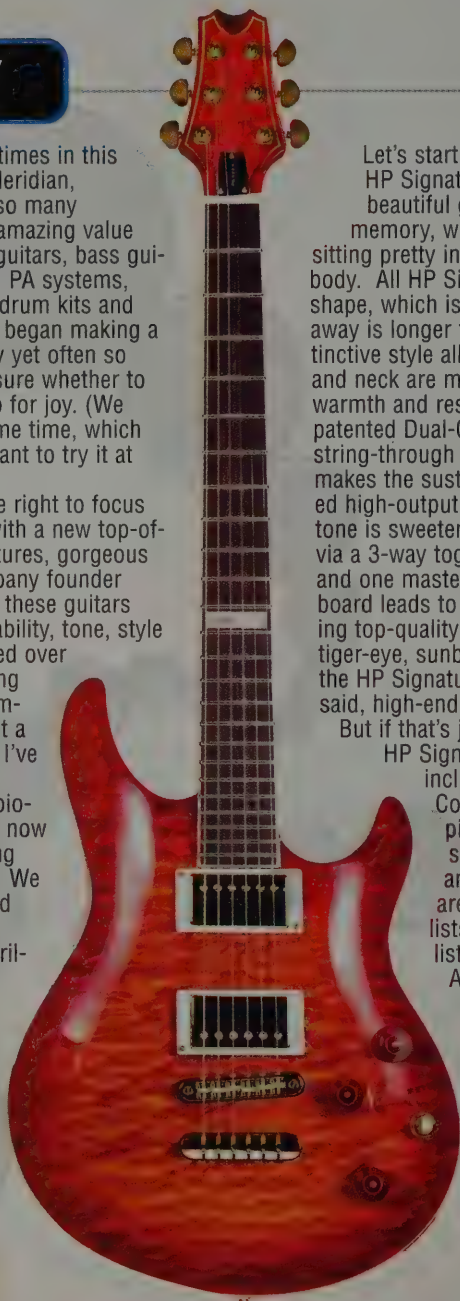
WRITTEN BY MICHAEL SHORE, COMPILED BY ILKO NECHEV



PEAVEY

Peavey has been featured tons of times in this space over the years, because the Meridian, Mississippi-based company makes so many instruments so well, and with such amazing value for the price. Electric and acoustic guitars, bass guitars, amps, keyboards, effects units, PA systems, mics, mixers, even DJ gear and the drum kits and unique quiet-practice drums Peavey began making a few years ago - all sport high quality yet often so surprisingly affordable we're never sure whether to shake our heads in disbelief or jump for joy. (We usually end up doing both at the same time, which takes some practice; you may not want to try it at home!).

So Peavey has certainly earned the right to focus on its high end, which it has done with a new top-of-the-line guitar series: the HP Signatures, gorgeous solid-body electrics named for company founder Hartley Peavey. The company calls these guitars "the ultimate refinement of the playability, tone, style and technology Peavey has developed over the past 39 years" - and that is saying something. Adds Hartley Peavey himself, "I wanted to bring to the market a guitar that encompassed everything I've learned during my many years of designing and making guitars. We pioneered a lot of technologies that are now industry standards, including shaping guitars with CNC router technology. We build each HP Signature on that solid foundation, using the finest selected woods, hardware and pickups for brilliant tone as well as a distinctive, unmistakable appearance." And yet, Peavey just can't leave out the value: even though the highest-priced HP Signature lists for a pretty penny indeed, at over \$2,000, there are also intermediate and budget models much more within reach of the typical **Hit Parader** reader.



Let's start at the the top of the top-of-the-line, the HP Signature Custom, which is one of the most beautiful guitars any company's produced in recent memory, with a stunning arched solid-quilt maple top sitting pretty in the middle of its sleek, double-cutaway body. All HP Signatures have that same basic body shape, which is generally Strat-based since the upper cutaway is longer than the lower, but which really has a distinctive style all its own. The Signature Custom's body and neck are made of mahogany, a wood noted for its warmth and resonance; sustain is enhanced by Peavey's patented Dual-Compression Bridge system, a unique string-through design whose metal-to-metal connection makes the sustain really, really ring and sing. The patented high-output dual-wound humbucking pickups, whose tone is sweetened by that maple arch-top, are activated via a 3-way toggle and controlled by two volume knobs and one master tone knob; the velvet-smooth ebony fretboard leads to a traditional three-a-side headstock sporting top-quality Schaller tuning machines. Available in tiger-eye, sunburst and transparent gloss black finishes, the HP Signature Custom lists for \$2,199.99. Like we said, high-end...and you get what you pay for.

But if that's just too rich for your blood, take heart: the HP Signature EXP has many of the same features, including the dual humbuckers and Dual-Compression Bridge; the body has a three-piece mahogany back with quilt maple cap, so it doesn't have quite the same sustain and beauty as the Custom, and the tuners are by Grover...all of which explains why it lists for much less than the Custom - but listing at only one-third the price, at \$699.99. Again, Peavey's commitment to shockingly good value just can't be denied.

And finally there's the entry level HP Signature EX, with a basswood body, veneer maple top, rosewood fretboard, stop-tailpiece bridge, the dual humbuckers. At \$399.99 list, it's frankly a downright ridiculously good value.

To learn more about these and Peavey's many, many other products, go online to www.peavey.com.

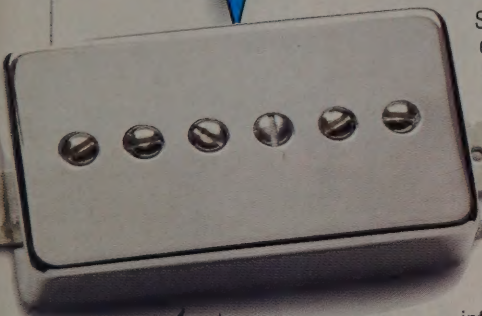


DUNLOP WYLDE OVERDRIVE

Dunlop's new MXR Wylde Overdrive pedal is named, yes, for fabled Ozzy Osbourne guitarist Zakk Wylde, who helped design it. Its Gain, Tone and Output controls deliver what Dunlop promises is "ass-kicking distortion in a bullet-proof enclosure." Who are we to doubt it'll turn a clean amp mean and push a dirty amp right over the edge? To learn more go online to www.jimdunlop.com.


A GUIDE TO THE LATEST GEAR

DUNCAN PHAT CAT PICKUPS

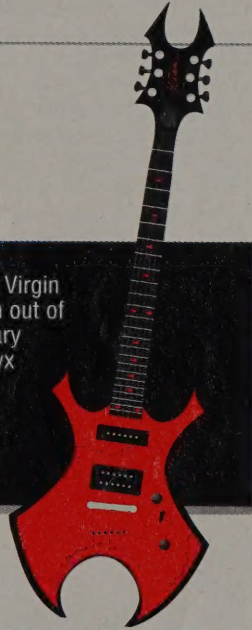


Seymour Duncan has solved a long-time problem for guitarists who play humbucker-equipped instruments and want the distinctive fat, punchy sound of a classic Gibson P-90 single-coil "soapbar" pickup. No more do such players have to irreparably alter their axes, often destroying their resale value. Duncan has long made a P-90-style pickup squeezed into a humbucker cover, known as the "Phat Cat," as a custom part for Hamer's Newport guitars (Hamer founder Jol Dantzig worked with Seymour Duncan himself to perfect them). Now Duncan has put Phat Cats into regular production. Direct retro-fits for most humbucker-equipped guitars, Phat Cats have enhanced upper-midrange response for more cut than traditional P-90s, while nickel-silver covers (available with nickel or gold plating) tame the 60-cycle hum and raggedness often associated with the classic soapbar. Phat Cats come in specially calibrated neck and bridge models; when played together they become hum-cancelling. For more info visit www.seymourduncan.com online.

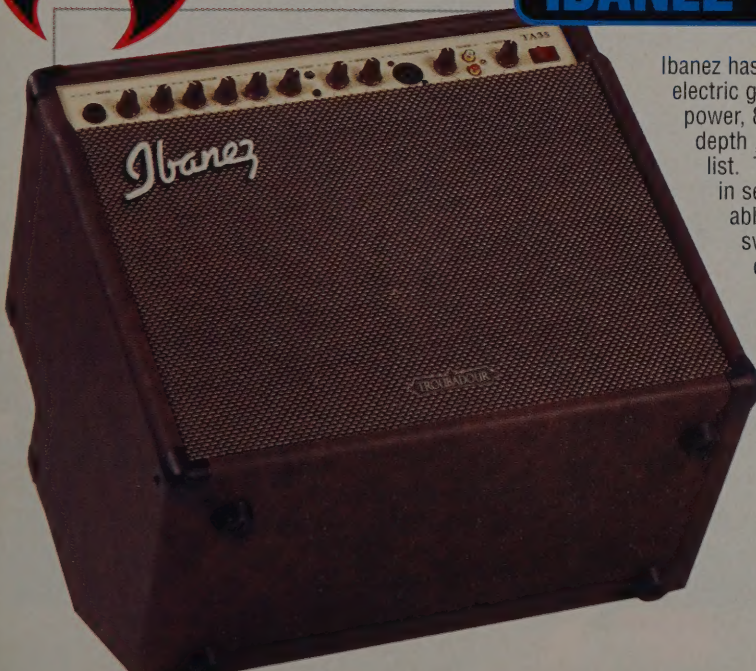
B.C. RICH VIRGO GUITAR



B.C. Rich, a legendary name in hard-rock guitars, has a new counterpart to its popular Virgin model: the Virgo, based on the distinctive Virgin body shape but with a cutaway bitten out of its pendulum bottom. Virgos are available in a choice of two spectacular, complementary finishes: Onyx finish with dramatic blood-red beveled edges, and Blood body with Onyx edges. Both have ebony fingerboards with Blood Drop inlay, and black hardware on mahogany bodies with Tune-O-Matic bridges. The pickup array is unusual for Rich: a humbucker at the bridge and a single-coil at the neck. To learn more about these and Rich's other guitars, check out www.bcrich.com online.



IBANEZ TROUBADOUR AMPS



Ibanez has two new Troubadour amps for acoustic and acoustic-electric guitars. The acoustic-dedicated TA20 has 20 watts of power, 8-inch coaxial speaker, switchable chorus with speed and depth, and reverb, all in a sealed-back cabinet for just \$229.99 list. The TA3 has 35 watts of power and 10-inch coax speaker in sealed tilt-back cabinet, plus active 3-band EQ with sweepable midrange, two discrete channels for vocals and guitars, switchable chorus and reverb, and an XLR balanced input on the mic channel, all for \$319.99 list. For more on these and Ibanez's many other amps, guitars and effects units, check out www.ibanez.com online.

INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

DRUM

MEINL

Meinl, the German cymbal and percussion company that's been coming on strong in the U.S. market the past several years, has just expanded its already vast cymbal range with the new Soundcaster line, made with a new B12 alloy. Its name derives from its higher tin content — 12% — for a smooth, rich and highly dynamic sound. Soundcasters are also made with uniform hammering for controlled, even decay across the harmonic overtone spectrum, and with very delicate lathing (the thinning of the cymbal towards its edge) for precise stick-definition and wide dynamic range. Learn more about these and Meinl's many other cymbals and percussion devices at www.meinlcymbals.com online.



puresound

MADE IN U.S.A.

PURESOUND

Finally, back in the world of acoustic percussion: Puresound's new P-BDP bass drum patch is made of specially designed Kevlar (what they make bulletproof vests with) that not only increases the durability of bass drum heads; its square shape helps focus the drum's sound, and makes it easier to combine patches for double-pedal applications. It'll accommodate most any beater on the market, including Puresound's own Speedball, and comes in convenient 2-pack polybags at \$9.95. For more info go online to www.puresoundpercussion.com.



YAMAHA

Yamaha has updated its very popular DTEXpress electronic drum kits with two new kits featuring improved sound, more natural feel and user-friendliness. The DTEXpress III (\$1,295) has new audio waveforms with ultra-realistic sounds (over 1,000 in all, program-mable into 80 kits and 127 songs) featuring a strong concentration on acoustic cymbal sounds, plus upgraded rubber pads with more natural feel and rebound. There's also a 3-zone snare pad, integrated 2-track sequencer, easy-view backlit display, and the "Groove Check" practice feature. And get this, it ships in a single box with its rack fully assembled and all cables coded at both ends for quick and easy setup. The DTEXpress III Special Edition has all that PLUS an ergonomic curved rack, three round multi-zone cymbal pads, a hi-hat controller with its electronic pad on a traditional-style stand...it's even the first electronic kit on the market to come with its own bass drum pedal and throne. At \$1,899, it breaks the \$2,000 price barrier with features to spare. Learn more at www.yamaha.com online.



Chris Hesse

and Yamaha Drums

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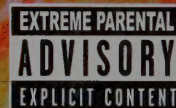
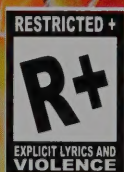
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